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The Gift of  
The Rev. Otis A. Skinner,  
of Boston.

Rec. June 26,  
1843.

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*Gift of the Author.*





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**SERIES OF SERMONS**

**IN DEFENCE OF**

**THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL  
SALVATION.**

**BY OTIS A. SKINNER.**

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**BOSTON:**

**A B E L T O M P K I N S ,**

**No. 38 Cornhill.**

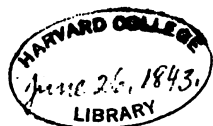
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## P R E F A C E.

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THE following Sermons were preached in consequence of the untiring efforts made in this city, during the past winter, against the doctrine of impartial grace, and the unchristian measures employed to cast reproach upon its advocates. The religion to which the sermons are devoted, is dear to the author; and he finds, in the weapons with which he and his brethren were assailed, a reason for renewed diligence in its defence, that the world may be saved from those false views which fill the hearts of their believers with bitterness, and tend to destroy the order and peace of society. The sermons attracted an unusual degree of attention, and were instrumental in bringing many to rejoice in the goodness of God. The favor with which they were received, *has induced the author to comply with the urgent*

request of the hearers, to have them published ; and if they subserve in any degree the interests of truth, he will be grateful for the privilege of contributing to the advancement of the most glorious doctrine ever believed by man.

*Boston, April 26, 1842.*

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# SERMON I.

THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS WO IRRECONCILABLE  
WITH DIVINE GOODNESS.

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The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.—PSALM cxlv. 9.

THE doctrine of endless wo is the most dreadful in its nature, and fearful in its results, of any one ever promulgated in the Christian church. No other evil so great as that which it threatens could possibly fall upon a human being. And yet, it is a doctrine which has been zealously advocated, ever since about A. D. 500. From that time down to the present, it has been regarded by the great body of the church as an essential doctrine of the Bible, and as one of the most efficient means, furnished by Heaven, for the prevention of crime, and the promotion of virtue. It is true, there have always been some who have denied its correctness, and many who doubted its beneficial tendency. This number has been rapidly increasing ever since the reformation; and, within the last half century, a most astonishing change



has been produced in the opinions of the Christian world.

In Germany, the doctrine has been almost driven from the church; and in England and France, while some have ceased to preach it, others have come boldly out against it. In this country, the change is equally encouraging. Our denomination has become numerous and powerful.

But those who reject the eternity of punishment are not confined to our order. The Dunkers, Moravians, Shakers, and Unitarians do not preach it. Among the clergy of the Episcopal, the Methodist, and the Orthodox churches, there are many who secretly believe with us.

This, however, is not the greatest change which has been experienced. We must look for that in the modification which the doctrine of endless wo has experienced among all limitarian sects; in its increasing repulsiveness to the feelings of its professed believers, and in the general unwillingness of the people to have it faithfully preached. It falls now gratingly upon almost every ear; it appears so dreadful, and cruel, and unreasonable, that few Christians can be found that will countenance the man who makes it the burthen of his labors.

Not only so. By comparing the sermons of the present age with those preached a century since, we shall find that ministers not only say far less about an endless hell than formerly, but what they say is in milder terms. A century since, the phrases, a "*burning hell*," "*endless damnation*," "*almighty vengeance*," were as common *as the words* "God," "Christ," and "Gospel."

Then, descriptions of the place, intensity and duration of misery, were introduced into every sermon, and constituted the chief topics of all the preaching. Now, you may listen to men of the same sects for months, and hear nothing of the kind; and now, instead of saying "burning hell," "almighty vengeance," "arrows of infinite wrath," and "thunderbolts of an enraged God," they say "the unhappiness of the future state," or "the stings of conscience."

All this is truly encouraging; it shows that the heaven is operating, that the schoolmaster is abroad, and that the day is approaching when this mammoth error shall be exterminated from the Christian world. We have reason, then, to persevere in our exertions, to go forward in the work of opposing error and defending truth; for if we are faithful, the victory will soon be ours.

I have thought, therefore, that a series of controversial sermons might be useful, and serve to aid the advancement of truth; and I trust I shall be pardoned for stepping aside from my ordinary mode of preaching, and presenting you, for a few successive Sabbaths, sermons which are chiefly doctrinal.

To-day, it will be my object to show, *that the doctrine of endless misery is irreconcilable with Divine goodness.*

Limitarian Christians may be divided into two parties—Calvinists and Arminians. All who teach endless misery, teach it in accordance with the views of one or the other of these parties. Let us then inquire,

**I. IF CALVINISM CAN BE RECONCILED WITH GOODNESS.**

In order to proceed understandingly, we must ascertain what are the properties of Divine goodness.

These have been thus described by Dr. Gill. He says, First, There is no cause of goodness out of God. The sinner loves God because he first loved him. Second: It is immutable; it is like himself: the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. It admits of no distinctions by which it appears to alter or vary. It neither increases nor decreases. There never were any stops or impediments to this goodness. Third: The goodness of God endures forever; \* \* \* it can never be dissolved; nothing can separate it, or separate from it.

This description of the properties of goodness is imperfect; it does not present them all. Goodness is infinitely great. It is also impartial. Speaking of its greatness, the apostle says, Neither height nor depth, things present nor things to come, life nor death, can separate from it. (Rom. viii. 38, 39.) Speaking of its impartiality, the text says, the Lord is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. The Savior also says, God so loved the world as to send his Son to save it. (John iii. 16, 17.)

Here, then, we have five properties of divine goodness. It is *free—immutable—eternal—infinite—and impartial.*

With these distinctly in mind, we will proceed to inquire whether the eternity of misery can be reconciled with such goodness. I will ask you to look first at the opinion which represents Deity as arbitrarily dooming a part of mankind to endless agony. According to this, the sinner is

doomed to hell, not as a punishment for sin, but to gratify God's sovereign will. There is one singular circumstance with regard to this system of faith. While it teaches that, from the foundation of the world, before man had done either good or evil, and without any foresight of faith or good works, God elected a certain number to endless life, and reprobated the rest to endless death; it teaches, also, that sinners are punished endlessly for the sins committed on earth! Now how can they be doomed to endless misery for their sins, and yet be doomed there by a decree made before they had an existence?

Do you say, the decree was made in anticipation of what their characters would be? I reply, that is contrary to the express declaration of the creed in which this system of reprobation is taught; for the creed says, *the decree was made without any foresight of the character which the reprobate would sustain*. Its language is, "Without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto."

Besides, the creed teaches, that some were doomed to perdition expressly for God's glory, and the gratification of his sovereign will; and not because he consulted the good of his subjects. Nor is this all. The decree of reprobation cut them off from all agency, and drove them into sin. It was as impossible for them not to do wrong, as for the deaf to hear, and blind to see. Look at the following, from the Westminster Confession: "By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and

angels are predisposed unto everlasting life, and others preordained to everlasting death. Neither are any others redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but the elect only; the rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice."

The same idea is set forth in the Confession of Faith adopted by the Second Baptist Church of this city. Article V. says: "We believe that all who have ever been, or who will be hereafter brought to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, were from the beginning chosen in him to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; and that, in consequence of the everlasting love of God to them through the great atonement, the Holy Spirit is sent down to effect the work of regeneration in their hearts, without whose influence none would ever repent or believe."

According to this, all who were to be saved were elected to life from the beginning; and to such the Holy Spirit is given. Now, as without its agency none can believe or be saved, and as the Spirit is given to none but the elect, the non-elect are necessarily lost; they are excluded from grace by the Divine decree. And yet, the advocates of this theory preach about the guilt of sinners in rejecting the Gospel and despising God. They represent them as appearing before the bar of God, to be judged according to their deeds; and they zealously and pathetically urge sinners to repent, that they may escape the punishments of

eternity! What an assemblage of inconsistencies! How surprising that they should be crowded into one system, and taught as divine truths!

Again.—Reprobation to endless death is opposed to impartial goodness.

The Lord is good unto all. How is he good to all? Can he be thus good, and doom a portion of mankind to endless suffering? To be impartial, he must deal by all alike—grant to all the same favors and mercies. But does he, according to the popular system of election and reprobation? What favor does he give to the elect? He gives them all the enjoyments of life. He surrounds them with friends who are cordial in their attachment, and assiduous in contributing to their happiness. For them he has lit up the heavens with beauty, loaded the earth with plenty, and crowded the world with all that is rich and captivating. For them, too, prophets preached, Jesus lived, and died, and rose, and apostles proclaimed the good news of salvation. And for them, an inheritance, which is undefiled and fadeth not away, has been prepared in heaven. These are God's favors to the elect—these are the ways in which he is good to them.

But to the reprobate he is not thus good. Let it not be replied, the blessings of life are free for all men, and in their equal distribution we see God's impartiality: for life is a curse to the slave of sin. Not only so, all blessings are curses to the reprobate, inasmuch as they will only enhance his misery beyond the grave.

Even the instructions of the heaven-sent messengers are curses; for they cannot be received by the reprobate; and if they could, they would

only wake up a hope, which would aggravate his despair, and sharpen the arrows which will pierce his soul in eternity.

The reprobate, then, has no blessing in this world, and surely none in the world to come. That, to him, is the land of darkness and pain. There, no ray of hope will ever visit his despairing bosom, and no respite from agony be for a moment enjoyed. He will suffer an eternity of uninterrupted and ever-increasing pain. Thus, existence to him is an endless curse!

Here we see there is an infinite difference in the condition of the elect and non-elect; and that this difference is purely the result of an arbitrary decree. How, then, can we say God is impartially good? If he is good to the elect, he cannot be to the non-elect; for, while he raises the former to an eternity of happiness, he dooms the latter to an eternity of misery.

This, then, contradicts the general voice of Scripture, which teaches that God is good to all men; that his mercy extends to all; and that the provisions of his grace are made for the whole world.

Let it not be said, God is impartially good, because this arrangement confers upon all men the greatest amount of happiness which it is possible for them to enjoy; for this is assuming that it is impossible for God to make all men happy—a position which destroys his perfections and makes him both weak and unwise.

I know it has been argued, that the greatest possible good of the world consists in the endless misery of a part, and the endless happiness of a part. But a bare statement of such a position is

sufficient to expose its fallacy ; for, certainly, the greatest good of any given number must be the greatest good of each one ; and, therefore, the greatest good of the world must be the greatest good of each individual of the world. If it be not so, there is no difference between the greatest good and the greatest evil of the world ; for, if the greatest possible good of all men consists in the endless happiness of a part and the endless misery of a part, the greatest misery of all must be the same ; and, hence, there is no difference between saying God is good to all and evil to all.

Now, surely, that must be a singular idea of goodness which makes it synonymous with hatred. And yet, such is the inevitable conclusion to which we are driven by the system of election, whenever we attempt to reconcile it with impartial goodness !

Let us discard the system, then, and acknowledge that God is good to all men ; good because he treats all with equal favor and kindness. Hence, if God is impartially good, he cannot have doomed one soul, by an arbitrary decree, to endless wo. This Dr. Gill himself saw ; and, therefore, in mentioning the properties of goodness, he did not mention its impartiality. But God is good to all ; and in the exercise of this goodness he sent his Son to die for the world. None, therefore, are reprobates.

I will now pass to the consideration of another theory—one which is thought to make the doctrine of endless wo perfectly compatible with divine goodness.

## II. ARMINIANISM OPPOSED TO GOODNESS.

This theory may be thus stated : God is good.



Guided by goodness, he placed all men in a situation where they might be saved ; and, therefore, if they are not, it is no fault of his ; so that those who are lost have none but themselves to blame.

This is thought to be a perfect vindication of the Divine character, and to justify him in the infliction of infinite and endless agony upon all who die impenitent. But, in my opinion, it is vastly more defective than the theory we have been examining ; for while that does not conflict with more than one property of goodness, this conflicts with every one. I know not that we can make a single exception. Let us examine it with reference to the five properties of goodness.

1. Arminianism opposed to impartial goodness.

Those who believe this theory dwell with great power and eloquence upon universal goodness. They say, we see it in the sun and stars ; in the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. They say, too, that we see it in the calls of mercy, in the precepts of duty, in the provisions of love, and in the death of Jesus. Hence they reject with abhorrence the idea that God is partial, and has decreed some to endless perdition. They unequivocally declare, that it contradicts all we know of God. But do they not also make God partial ?

Look at facts. All men are not alike constituted. They have different temperaments, dispositions, and inclinations. Some are mild and amiable ; others, querulous and cruel. Some have a strong natural inclination to do right ; others have a strong natural inclination to do wrong. Now suppose these different persons are judged by the same laws, and that all who come

short of certain attainments are doomed to endless wo; would God be impartial? Would the querulous and cruel, and those with strong appetites, stand on an equal footing with the others?

Again. All are not equally favored in the opportunities they enjoy. Some live where they are blessed with special privileges, and where they are so surrounded by good influences that they could hardly go astray if they would. Others are born and brought up in sinks of moral pollution: they hear constantly the language of profaneness, witness daily acts of violence, and are surrounded by those who are beastly, intemperate, and disregard all the institutions of religion.

Now surely the advantages of these persons are by no means equal; and if they are to be judged according to the characters they form here, God is a partial being.

The same remarks will apply to the heathen and Christian world. The advantages of the latter are vastly superior to those of the former; and consequently they stand a much better chance of salvation. Indeed, some say that the heathen have no chance whatever, and that they are daily sinking into hell, because ignorant of him of whom they have never heard!

Here, then, are inequalities, which destroy the impartiality of God, if we admit, in connection with them, the eternity of suffering. They as effectually destroy the divine impartiality as does a decree of reprobation; for, in consequence of the unfavorable circumstances under which some are placed, they are made heirs of endless perdition; and others are made heirs of glory in consequence of the superior advantages they enjoy.

There is an infinite difference in the destiny of men, because they are differently constituted, or are surrounded by different influences.

Thus is God partial. He grants favors to one which he withholds from another ; and, owing to the difference of character arising from this difference in the favors enjoyed, a part are made endlessly happy, and a part endlessly miserable. The text is a sufficient refutation of this idea ; for if the Lord be good to all, he must so arrange his providence that all shall in the end enjoy an equal amount of mercies and privileges.

2. The theory we are now examining, and which teaches that all may be saved, and if they are not, no blame can be attached to God, is opposed to the greatness of his goodness. Our efforts to benefit an individual are always in proportion to the strength of our love. See the labors of a devoted mother, for her sick and helpless child. For this she will toil by day and watch by night. While such is the course of a good mother, an unfeeling, hardened woman may permit a helpless child, that has been entrusted to her care, to perish from cruel neglect. All this difference is owing to love. The mother is prompted to her toils and watchings by the strength of her affections. We are right, therefore, in saying, the efforts of love to benefit its objects will always be in proportion to its greatness. Hence, to see what God will do for the soul, we have only to ask, How great is his love ? But here is no chance for controversy ; for it has already been established, that God's love is infinite—it is equal to his power and wisdom. It will, therefore, do for man all that it is possible should be done ; it

will make him as happy as a finite intelligence can be.

Now will goodness do this, according to the theory in question? Has it provided a way by which this grand result shall be accomplished? All will answer, no, for the theory consigns countless millions to endless sufferings. It will avail nothing to say, those who are lost might have been saved—they are doomed to endless woe for a voluntary neglect of privileges; because had the provisions of goodness been the best which God was capable of making, they would have been effectual in the salvation of all, and there would have been no contingency in regard to the result of his plan of grace.

The theory, then, allows that God is not infinitely good; for it says, he simply does that for man which renders it possible for him to be saved; whereas, he might have done more—he might have provided means which would render his salvation certain. We must, therefore, either deny the theory, or deny the infinity of God's goodness.

There is another difficulty. Those who are not saved are not left to suffer the natural consequences of despising the offers of grace; but God dooms them to all the agonies he can inflict; he pursues them with infinite vengeance; he makes them miracles of endless suffering. Now wherein is the goodness of this? Why torture them endlessly? Why make a prison of torture, in which to torment them through ages interminable? What is there good in this?

Besides, when God provided the means of salvation he knew who would be saved and who

lost. He knew all things from the beginning of the world. Was there any great goodness in making provisions which he knew would be of no service? Can I be justly reckoned good for offering to aid the poor or help the distressed, when I know that my offers will not be accepted?

This question does not reach back far enough; for God not only knew that his offers would not be accepted, but that they would be the means of aggravating the endless misery of countless millions. Now would you think me very good for making an offer to an individual, which I foresaw would prove a great curse to him? No, you would not; but judging my motive by the expected results, you would call me evil in making the offer.

God, therefore, is not infinitely good according to this system; for he has not done all that was possible—he has only offered salvation, when he might have secured it to the world. Indeed, the system teaches that God is evil to some; for he formed a plan which he foresaw would be the means of adding to the unending torment of a great proportion of his children. Now as we should judge the motives of God by the expected result of his dealings, we must conclude that he is not good in any sense or degree to those who are lost, and that he never designed they should be benefited by the means of grace.

3. Arminianism is opposed to the immutability and eternity of goodness.

All who advocate the theory in question maintain that it justifies them in saying, God is perfectly good, because it was an act of infinite mercy to make provision for all men, and send his Son to

give himself a ransom for their sins. If we disconnect from this act God's infinite knowledge, we must allow that he was good in so doing. But we cannot disconnect his knowledge from the act; the understanding of God is infinite; known unto him are all things; and, therefore, we cannot avoid the conclusion, that he designed just the result which will occur.

Let us, however, waive this consideration, and say his design was really good, infinitely good. This position admits that goodness seeks the happiness of man, and that it can have no other end in view. If, therefore, God should ever inflict a torture intended only to curse those who suffer it, he is not good to them—he pursues a course the opposite of that pursued in sending his Son to die for our redemption. But his goodness is *immutable* and *eternal*, and therefore, he cannot change his course; it must always be the same as when he devised a way for human redemption.

Do you say this reasoning is opposed to fact; for God punishes sinners? I answer, disciplinary punishment is beneficial to the sinner, as Paul says; God chastens for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. (Heb. xii. 10.) Just as certain, then, as divine goodness is eternal and immutable, so certain will God never change the system of his government towards any creature. The moment he changes this, his goodness changes, or ceases to be.

I cannot, therefore, admit that, when the wicked shall have passed into the future state, God will become their enemy; he will there be to them the same gracious being which he is now; for he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He will

there open to them the storehouse of his grace, unfold to them the riches of his love, and cause the light of heaven to beam upon them in all its brilliancy and glory. His arms of compassion will there be round about them; and he will be their God, and they shall be his people.

God's plan of government has never yet changed. It is the same now as when he watched over the patriarchs in all the tenderness of infinite mercy, and as when he first disclosed the full and blessed provision of grace through Jesus Christ. As it has been, so will it ever be. When countless ages shall have passed away, and we shall have wondered all that time at the extent and riches of God's mercies, he will still be gracious and good, and be engaged in carrying forward the same holy purposes which he formed in the beginning. God's goodness is immutable and eternal.

4. Arminianism is opposed to the freeness of love. If we have any doubt in regard to this reasoning, it will be removed by considering, that what we do can have no influence upon God. Goodness is a part of his nature, and not something caused by human virtue or the death of Christ. Let me say, too, that the action of goodness does not depend upon anything we do. God pursues his purposes of love when we are sinful, just the same as when we are virtuous. His love is wholly uncaused, and the blessings it bestows are not induced by anything out of him. Sin, therefore, will not prevent our coming into an enjoyment of divine grace; for it is the work of goodness so to subdue the heart and destroy sin, that it shall not bar man from receiving divine grace. Goodness

does not wait for the dead to come to life; it raises them up, and gives them life. It does not wait for the blind to open their eyes; but removes the blindness, and enables them to see the glory of truth. It does not wait for the wanderer to return; but sends one after him to bring him back. Goodness provides the means, opens the way and executes the work.

“ Grace first contrived the way  
To save rebellious man;  
And all its steps that grace display  
Which drew the wondrous plan.

Grace taught my roving feet  
To tread the heavenly road;  
And new supplies each hour I meet,  
While pressing on to God.

Grace all the work shall crown,  
Through everlasting days:  
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise.”

The Scriptures fully sustain the foregoing conclusions. They say, “ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”—(Heb. ii. 9.) “ For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”—(1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.) “ And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”—(1 Tim. i. 14, 15.) “ For it pleased the



Father that in him should all fulness dwell ; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself ; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”—(Col. i. 19, 20.) “ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”—(Eph. iii. 8.) “ In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”—(1 John iv. 9, 10.) “ And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”—(John xii. 32.) “ Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”—(1 Cor. xv. 24, 26.)

Thus do the Scriptures teach that the free, immutable, eternal, infinite and impartial goodness of God, will save all men from sin, and exalt them to immortal glory.

## SERMON II.

### THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS MISERY IRRECONCILABLE WITH GOD'S PURPOSE.

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Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him. —Eph. i. 9, 10.

It is universally acknowledged that no intelligent being can act without a purpose. This is true as it relates to men in all their different pursuits. The farmer tills his land, that he may raise the means of subsistence for himself and family. The mechanic constructs a machine, to perform with greater facility the work it is designed to execute. The mariner crosses the tempestuous ocean, subjects himself to its dangers and hardships, that he may enrich himself with the treasures of other countries. The physician makes himself acquainted with the science of medicine, and the various diseases to which the world are subject, that he may restore the health of the sick and infirm, and render himself useful. *And the divine studies the great principles of re-*

ligion and the various habits of men, that he may be instrumental in redeeming them from iniquity, and making them zealous of good works. And so with all men ;—they have a purpose in whatever they do. This is true both of the evil and the good, the wise and the unwise.

I may remark, also, that all the purposes of men correspond to their wisdom and goodness. The ignorant and unreflecting, not having foresight and penetration of mind, often purpose what would result in their greatest injury, and lay their plans in such a manner as to defeat the end they desire to gain.

All purposes are perfect or imperfect, according to the minds which form them.

It is the same with regard to the character of purposes. They are good or bad according to the hearts in which they originate. Hence, while the bad are laying plans to injure their neighbors, the good are laying plans to promote the happiness of those around them ; while the gay are forming purposes with regard to the fashions and amusements of life, the grave are forming purposes in regard to matters of a sober character.

These remarks on purposes are as applicable to God as men ; for he cannot act without a purpose ; neither can he have a purpose which conflicts with his wisdom or goodness. A God of infinite wisdom cannot have an unwise purpose ; neither can a God of infinite goodness have a bad purpose, or one not altogether good. As the purposes of man are perfect and good according to the perfection of his wisdom and the goodness of his heart, so are the purposes of God according to his wisdom and goodness.

I will ask you to keep these remarks in mind, while we consider,

I. WHAT IS THE DIVINE PURPOSE CONCERNING MAN. And,

II. THE WISDOM OF THAT PURPOSE.

There are many ways by which to decide what God has purposed.

1. We can decide this by his goodness. All agree that it was goodness which led God to create man for a benevolent end. Goodness cannot desire misery; its only desire is happiness. "The Lord is good and *doeth* good." "Love worketh no ill." If, therefore, God is good to all, he must purpose their salvation. This is as certain as that every effect must correspond with its cause. Hence, as all Christians ascribe impartial goodness to the Almighty, they must allow that he purposed, in the beginning, the salvation of all. Had he been good to a part, he would have purposed to save only that part. Had he been good to none, he would not have purposed the salvation of any. These are self-evident truths, which do not require illustration or proof. Goodness is the procuring cause of salvation; and, therefore, the plan of salvation must embrace all to whom goodness extends.

2. We can ascertain the purpose of God from his will.

It would be a singular fallacy to say, that God's purpose and will are at variance; for this would represent him as laboring against himself, and forming plans to disappoint his own desire. We cannot, therefore, allow any such variance; and consequently, when we know what the will of God is, we *shall* know his purpose. St. Paul says,

"God will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth." He also says, that it is the mystery of God's will to gather in one all things which are in heaven and on earth.

It makes no difference whether we call this a will of purpose or simply a will of desire; it is enough to know that God's will and purpose agree—that they do not oppose each other, and that what God wills he purposes. Hence the text says,—“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.” Thus he purposes what he wills; and all speculations about the difference between a will of desire and a will of purpose are entirely unmeaning.

3. We can learn the divine purpose from the death of Christ.

There has been, in every age of the church, much controversy about the particular agency which the sufferings of the Savior exert. But while there has been this controversy, all have agreed, that the end which his death was designed to secure was the salvation of sinners. This was the great object to be effected. Jesus was a propitiation for sin—he died to take away sin. He gave himself a ransom for sinners. All, then, for whom he died must be embraced in God's purpose of mercy; for no being would attempt to do what he had first rendered impossible; neither would God send his Son to die for those he had not purposed for salvation. His purpose, then, embraces all for whom he appointed Jesus to die.

Hence we have only to ask,—Did Jesus die for

the world ? This is so often and so fully asserted, that we wonder any should ever have called it in question. Hear the apostle. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die : yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—(Rom. v. 6—8.) "For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead : and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."—(2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) Thus Jesus died for the ungodly, or all men ; he died for the salvation of the whole world ; and, therefore, God's purpose must embrace all men.

4. The Scriptures are explicit in regard to God's purpose. They teach that he created all things for his pleasure, and surely none would say it is his pleasure to render any the subjects of ceaseless wo. It is God's pleasure to gather all things in Christ Jesus. All, then, were created for happiness. Again : "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage."—(Heb. ii. 14, 15.) Here Christ is said to have been sent to destroy the cause of all sin—to heal the fountain of impurity—and deliver the soul from bondage. We have the same idea in these words : For this

purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.—(1 John iii. 5.) Sin is the work of the devil; and, therefore, Jesus was manifested to destroy sin—take it away from the world—remove it from the hearts of all men.

The same idea is set forth in the text: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." By all things, the apostle means all men; the same as when he says, *all things are of God*, who hath committed to us the ministry of reconciliation. The phrase means the whole human creation—all for whom Jesus died. This is the meaning attached to it by Professor Stuart, of Andover.

The text, then, teaches, that God has purposed the salvation of all mankind.

These are some among the many reasons which may be offered in favor of the opinion that God's purpose embraces all the human family—that none are excluded from it—that it is as impartial as his mercy and grace.

Perhaps it will be said, in opposition to these views, that St. Paul represents some as being called according to God's purpose, and others as reprobated according to the same purpose. But, I ask, is there any evidence here that some were purposed for endless happiness, and others predestinated to endless death? Not a word of the kind is mentioned. He was not speaking of *purposes that related to the eternal condition of men*,

but of those which related to the condition of the church in his time. God foreknew and predestinated that some of the Romans should be conformed to the image of his Son—that they should love him, and that all things should work together for their good; and that neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, should separate them from the love of Christ. But not a word is said, that, in due time, the rest should not believe, and be brought in. Indeed, he says, “As sin hath reigned unto death, even so shall grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Therefore, the purpose, of which the apostle was here speaking, related to the condition of the church on earth, and not to man’s final condition.

And so it was in relation to blinding the Jews. Their blindness was only limited. Hence Paul, in reply to these words of David, “Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them; let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway,” says, they have not stumbled that they should fall; and argues that their fall was an event, purposed by the Most High, to extend the gospel to the Gentiles, and thereby save the whole. That God may purpose a temporary blindness, and act consistently with his nature and will, I believe, since blindness may be overruled for good; and, that he may call one and leave another, I believe, since that arrangement may result in the greatest good. Hence, present blindness and sin are no proof of endless blindness and sin. They are partial and temporary evils, designed to effect the greatest



good of the whole. God makes everything minister to one great leading purpose—a purpose which is agreeable to his nature, in accordance with his will, and in unison with his commands. God, then, never purposed the endless misery of any of his children.

Having, as I trust, shown, to the entire satisfaction of every hearer, that God has purposed the endless happiness of all men, I will proceed,

## II. TO CONSIDER THE WISDOM OF THAT PURPOSE.

In doing this, we may assume, that God, when he formed his purpose, knew all the obstructions that would be encountered in its accomplishment. He knew how ignorant man would become; how wilful he would be in his opposition to truth; how he would despise the offers of grace, and how deeply he would become immersed in sin. We may assume, too, that God knew what would be the effect of all the means of grace which he was about to provide, and whether they would be sufficient to accomplish the end desired. All this he knew, for his understanding is infinite, and known unto him are all things, from the beginning of the world. To his eye, all things are naked and open.

These assumptions being admitted truths, any inference legitimately drawn from them must be acknowledged correct. We may, therefore, infer, that when God's purpose was formed, means were provided sufficient to carry it fully into execution. This conclusion is inevitable; for it would be supreme folly in God to form a plan, and seek its execution, when he saw, in the beginning, that the means provided would be *incompetent to produce* the desired object.

Suppose a case. Here is a father who wishes to reform three sons that have been blinded and deceived by the fascinations of sin. He loves them with all the tenderness of a father's heart, and his chief desire is their reformation. For this he would be willing to sacrifice all his possessions, and even the world, if it were his. Now, would such a father be likely to adopt a plan which he knew would be wholly unavailing, and which would even render his sons far more wicked and miserable? Would such a course be the dictate of either wisdom or goodness? I know the answer which will be given. You will tell me, that no father would form such a plan. But shall we charge upon God that which man would not do? Shall we accuse him of having formed a plan, which he knew would defeat his design? Why, no being attempts what he knows he cannot do. Neither does any attempt to accomplish an object in a way which he knows will be unsuccessful. Man often attempts what is doubtful in his mind; but never, in all his folly, what he knows cannot be done. We are, therefore, led unavoidably to the conclusion, that God's plan of grace is furnished with all the means which are requisite to produce the desired result. If it is not, God acts against knowledge, and has formed a plan which he knew would, in part, be unavailing, and prove an infinite curse.

Unless we are right, God does not purpose the salvation of all; he purposes the salvation only of those whom he knew his plan would be instrumental in saving. A single illustration will be sufficient to establish this point. Suppose there are six human beings cast away upon a desolate

island. Three of these are adults, and three helpless infants. I procure a ship, and send to that island, and give directions to have all taken who will come of themselves on board the ship, and no others. When I make this arrangement, I know that only the adults can walk, that the infants are perfectly helpless, and, therefore, that the adults will be the only ones brought back by the ship. Now what would my purpose be in such a transaction? Would any human being give me the credit of having purposed the rescue of the children? Would not all unhesitatingly say that my purpose as virtually excluded them as it included the adults?

This case is a fair illustration of the point we are discussing; for if God's plan of grace does not save all, he knew at its formation that it would not; and forming it as he did, knowing what would be the result, he could no more have purposed that it should save all, than I could have purposed that the ship should bring back the children.

If, then, the view we oppose is correct, God never purposed the salvation of all men; he did not create all for his pleasure; he never sent his Son to save all; and when the Bible asserts that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world, it asserts that which is absolutely false. Christ was sent to save only those which God foresaw would accept the terms of grace. The rest were never intended to be saved. 'Unless we allow this, we must advocate the absurd idea, that God purposed what he knew would not be accomplished, and what he had provided no *means for accomplishing*. The truth is, God

knew in the beginning what would be the result of his plan of grace ; and that result he designed. It will be of no avail to say, God gave man an agency, and designed that he should use it either for his damnation or salvation, just as in the full liberty of his will he should choose ; for that is not stating the whole truth : it is withholding the fact that God knew what choice would be made. This statement, therefore, is no proof that a different result was purposed from what actually occurs. This is so evident, that some divines have argued, in order to avoid the difficulty, that God did not know how man would choose, and, therefore, could not be chargeable with any blame for giving an existence which terminates in an endless curse. The celebrated Dr. Adam Clarke has reasoned in this manner. If he were right in this particular, God might be said to purpose the salvation of all men ; for we often form purposes which are never accomplished, and if God is ignorant, like us, he may do the same.

It should be remembered, however, that God is not thus ignorant ; that he sees the end from the beginning ; and, therefore, when he created man, the result of that creation was present with him, and that result, whether good or bad, must have been purposed. Hence we must either say, God purposed the endless misery of a part, and the endless happiness of a part, or say that all mankind will be heirs of grace ; for the termination of his government, whatever it may be, was originally purposed.

Let us take another mode of reasoning. I have said that all plans are perfect or imperfect

according to the minds by which they are formed; and that, as God is a being of infinite knowledge, his plan of salvation must be absolutely perfect. I will ask your attention, therefore, while I proceed to point out some of the characteristics of such a plan.

1. It must be sufficiently broad to embrace all mankind.

If an individual should invite his friends to an entertainment, but make provision for only half the number to be present, we should pronounce his arrangements sadly imperfect, and accuse him of a lamentable want of wisdom. But would he be more unwise than God, if his plan of grace reaches only half he desires to save? Suppose we adopt the common sentiment, which teaches that all who die without faith in the Savior will be lost; we have then a plan of grace professing to seek the salvation of all men, and yet having no provision by which to reach one half of the race. Is this perfection? Could we say of such a system, that it is perfect? Does it show that God is good unto all mankind?

2. A perfect system must have no contingencies which can defeat its accomplishment.

Divines talk much about human agency, the liberty of the will, and the conditions of salvation. We have no time to examine these points. It will be sufficient to state, that we believe in human agency, in a freedom of the will, and in conditions of salvation. We subscribe most fully to the opinion, that man is an accountable being; that he will be rewarded and punished according to his deeds. Every man is conscious of such an accountability; and any system of divinity

which denies it, does violence to feelings which can no more mislead us, than reverse the established laws of nature.

But in this agency of man, there is no power to thwart the divine purposes. It is not an agency which can make all things bend to its desires ; but it is a limited agency, and one which is so far subject to the controlling influences of God, as to be kept within bounds that guard the highest interests of the soul. Any other arrangement would be neither wise nor good. We should not commend that father who should commit to his inexperienced son the management of an extensive business, when he knew that he was wholly unequal to the task, and that he would soon squander all entrusted to his care. Neither should we commend the persons who should employ a man to act as their agent in superintending their affairs, when they knew that he was wholly incompetent for the office, or that he would shamefully abuse the trust reposed in him. No reasonable person would give to another an agency which he knew would defeat the object for which that agency was given. We are not thus accustomed to give men weapons with which to war against us.

Now for what has God given man the agency which he possesses ? Certainly not for the purpose of ensnaring him, or endangering his eternal interests. To say he has done it for this, would be charging him with deception and injustice, and ascribing to him a character which we could neither reverence nor love. For what then was the agency given ? We answer, to stimulate man to exertion—to discipline him by trial—to

open to him the riches and glories of grace, and raise him, through mercy, kindness and compassion, to the blessedness of heaven. This is an end worthy of infinite wisdom and love, and such as we should expect a heavenly Father would seek. Hence, human agency, given for such a benevolent purpose, cannot have power to prevent the accomplishment of that great design, formed in the beginning, and to which all the arrangements of God directly tend. It implies, therefore, no contingency in regard to the result of God's government. Here is perfection, and perfection worthy of infinite wisdom.

3. To be perfect, God's plan of grace must be furnished with all the means requisite for the removal of the obstructions which impede the work of salvation.

This position, though closely allied to the one we have been discussing, requires a separate consideration. The obstructions to the work of grace may be reduced to three classes, viz., *ignorance*, *error*, and *sin*. These array man against his God, and cause the world to engage in strife and bitter contentions. Remove these, therefore, and all men are saved—the work of redemption is completed. But many argue that they cannot be removed; that there is no power in the scheme of grace sufficient for such a work; and, therefore, they point to ignorance, error, and sin, as proofs that all will not be saved.

If this objection be well founded, in what consists the perfection of God's plan? If its light is not superior to human ignorance, its truth more powerful than error, and its grace more effectual than sin, it must indeed fall very far short of per-

fection. But God can flood the world with light; he can make truth ride in triumph over error from sea to sea; and he can cause the waters of grace to wash every heart in his vast dominion. No wisdom can be superior to God's, and, therefore, his plan of salvation must have means which can remove all obstructions, and reconcile every heart to himself. Indeed, God can make the wrath of man praise him, and restrain what will not subserve this great purpose. The whole history of the church is an illustration of this holy truth. How often has the triumph of error served to help the onward march of the gospel! Look at the crucifixion of Jesus. The very conquest of his enemies was the means of establishing his religion on an everlasting foundation, and of clothing it with a power which will enable it to go forward in triumph, till its great mission is finished, and the world saved. Nothing, then, can prevent the ultimate victory of the gospel over all the causes of human wo.

There is still another mode of reasoning by which I should be glad to establish the position we have assumed; but I can do no more than give its outlines. If God's purpose to save all men is not accomplished, it must be for one of three reasons.

1. Because he will find it impossible. This none will admit; for all agree in saying that God could save all. He has the wisdom and power to mould every heart as he pleases.

2. Because the expense of accomplishing it is greater than the benefit.



This conclusion is equally as fallacious as the first; for the expense was known to God when the purpose was originally formed; and had it been greater than the benefit, he would never have made the purpose. Besides, the salvation of the soul is infinitely important, and justifies any measures, however expensive they may be.

3. Because God has changed his purpose. But this implies an imperfection in wisdom; for it shows that he has discovered something which was unknown in the beginning. Or it implies a want of goodness; for if he has so altered his plan as to purpose the endless misery of some, he has made his purpose, in part, evil, which he could not have done if he were supremely good.

Hence, God's purpose to save all will be fully accomplished. If we turn to the Scriptures, they fully justify this glorious conclusion.

1. They teach that God works all things after the counsel of his own will; that the kingdom is his, and he is the Governor among the nations; and that he does all his pleasure in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth. Read the history of God's dealings, as recorded in the Bible, and you will find, that every event foretold has come to pass at the appointed time, and in the appointed manner; that every purpose in regard to the establishment of truth, or the revolution of nations, has been executed, and that kingdoms and empires have been agents to fulfil his designs. Why, then, shall we say, he can accomplish all designs, except that which relates to salvation? The truth is, his purpose to save man is the great purpose for which all others were formed; and shall we say the less ones will be all accom-

plished, but the chief one defeated? God does *all his pleasure*.

2. The Bible says, as God has thought, so shall it come to pass; and as he has purposed, so shall it stand. Now, is not this testimony enough? Can we ask for anything more explicit? What has God purposed? Among other things, he has purposed the endless happiness of the world. This purpose, therefore, shall be executed; for as he has thought, so shall it be done.

This view of the Divine purpose is as honorable to God, as it is cheering to the soul. We see that there is a wise and gracious Being who superintends all the interests of mankind, and who is guiding everything to a glorious termination. Men may fight against him, despise his law, and give themselves up to the degradation of sin; but no power can obstruct the progress of his plan, or destroy the efficacy of the means appointed to enlighten the ignorant and save the sinful. "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

## SERMON III.

THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS MISERY IRRECONCILABLE  
WITH THE NATURE OF MAN.

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And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.—1 Cor. xii. 26.

MAN is a wonderful being. He is possessed of organs and powers, so reciprocal in their operation, that "the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor, again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you." He is one of the proudest monuments of the Creator's skill and goodness, and bears the distinct impress of a Divine Maker. Whenever we consider his complicated physical structure, his vast intellectual powers, and his heart of sympathy, we cannot but exclaim with the Psalmist—"How manifold are thy works, Lord God Almighty; in wisdom hast thou made them all."

By studying this work of God, we can learn with a certainty, satisfactory to the candid and reflecting, the end for which man was designed, and the glorious destiny which awaits him. In

order to gain all the information that is possible on this important subject, I will ask your attention,—

I. To THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE OF MAN.

II. To HIS INTELLECTUAL POWERS. And,

III. To HIS SYMPATHETIC NATURE.

As I am no anatomist, I shall be obliged to depend entirely on the views of others, for what I have to say on man's physical structure. One of the best articles I ever perused on this subject may be found in Godwin's work against atheism; and on that I shall chiefly rely for what I have to offer on our first proposition.

Let us first consider the arrangement made to protect the brain and heart. In this God has proceeded upon the principle adopted in constructing a watch. The fine work which is peculiarly valuable, and so easily susceptible of injury from dust or external violence, is carefully guarded by a strong metal case. The same prudent precaution is observed in constructing an organ and a piano-forte.

There is the same wise precaution in the structure of man. His brain and heart, which the least violence would destroy, are safely guarded by a frame-work almost as strong as iron. The bones of the cranium rise up around the brains, like solid walls, and, uniting into an arch, spread a dome above them. Within is a plate, hard and brittle, which no point can easily pierce. To prevent this from being chipped or cracked, there is an exterior plate of less hardness, but of less susceptibility from a blow; and over the whole is spread a soft, thick mat of hair, which tends materially to break the shock arising from collision

with any hard body, and thus to save the brain from concussion, while at the same time it gives beauty to the appearance.

A safeguard equally great has been thrown around the heart and lungs. Behind, the spine is the central guard, while from it the ribs extend in a circular form till they join in a front defence, which is the breast bone. Thus room is afforded for the play of these organs, and ample protection is secured.

The same wisdom is manifested in so constructing the human frame, that man can walk and labor. In order to accomplish this end, the framework must not be all of one piece; for then man would be motionless like a statue. Hence, the human skeleton is made up of two hundred and fifty-four distinct bones, which are all connected and combined into one piece of framework. How wonderfully is this frame constructed! Look at the erect posture of man. One bone is placed upon another, in such a manner as to give strength and firmness to the towering structure.

But erectness secures only one end. Another arrangement was required to enable this framework to move in its different parts. The head, containing four senses, required a freedom and facility of motion in every direction. How fully is this end secured! Look, too, at the facility of motion in the arms, hands, and feet. A joint is fitted in every place which is essential to give man the control over every part of his system. The two hundred and fifty-four bones come together in such a manner that each one is exactly fitted to its place. We have a convex always

working in a concavity, a tenon in a mortice, a projection in an indentation.

The hand, small as it is, has no less than twenty-seven bones, which admit of motions and positions almost innumerable ; and the foot, with its thirty-six distinct parts, is so put together, that it supports the fabric like a pedestal, and has elastic arches that preserve the body from sudden shocks in walking, and give a springiness to its motion.

This is only a glance at the framework of man. If we look at the skin, the flesh, the muscles, the veins, we shall see the same wise arrangement. I have not time to enlarge here ; but I must ask you to look at the wisdom displayed in the arrangement of the muscles.

To every muscle which moves a bone, there is an antagonist, which acts in a different direction. A single muscle would leave the human frame nearly as incapable of action as though it had none at all. There is a muscle to straighten the arm, as well as bend it ; one to bring the head to its position after it has been turned ; one to open the eye, as well as to shut it. Without this capability of antagonistic action in the different muscles, it would be impossible to stand, to walk, to eat, or, in fact, to maintain, for any length of time, our existence. It must also be noticed, that whenever, in obedience to the will, any particular muscle is called into action, its antagonist immediately relaxes, or the action of both might keep the limb at rest ; a flexor and extensor yield as readily and certainly to each other's movement, as the two scales of a balance, or as if they acted by mutual consent.

To perform all the requisite functions, a very large apparatus of muscles is necessary. Those by which voluntary motion is performed, are four hundred and thirty-six. And is it not a most astonishing instance of contrivance, that these muscles should be so placed as not to interfere with each other's motions, and yet to occupy so small a space? They pass over and under each other, they cross each other; in some cases one passes through another, or they change the direction of their power as by a loop or a pulley; or, situated for convenience at a distance, they perform their office by means of a small cordage, where a large muscle could not act.

What a wonderful arrangement! How perfect the physical structure of man!

Now, I ask, to what conclusion are we irresistibly led by this complete mechanism? Be not hasty in giving an answer. Take time to weigh the question in all its bearings. Godwin, and other writers against atheism, infer from it that there is a God of infinite wisdom, and that he is the Creator of man. This inference is unquestionably correct, and one which no atheist can combat with even a semblance of plausibility. So obvious is this inference to which we refer, that any who dispute it have reason to fear that there is some defect in the organization of their mind, or that they are laboring under a species of derangement.

But this is not the only inference which can be legitimately drawn from man's physical structure. There is another, equally as important and obvious as this. The Being that has wisdom thus to contrive and adapt means to a desired end, must have

wisdom for the accomplishment of any result desired. This is a self-evident position. It is equally self-evident, that a wisdom which would exert itself to form this complete physical structure, for the comfort and happiness of man on earth, would make his arrangements equally as perfect for the endless happiness of man. We may as well argue against the Divine existence as against this position ; for no reason can be given why an object of trivial importance should be secured by a perfect adaptation of means, and an end of infinite importance not secured by means equally perfect in their adaptation. He that disputes this, not only charges upon God the infinite inconsistency of having a better plan for the accomplishment of a trivial than an important end ; but he charges him with having an imperfect plan, of not adapting his means so as to secure the result desired ! Now, by what authority is God charged with imperfection ? Look at man, at the structure of his eye, his ear, his hand, or foot, and point me to one imperfection. Look at anything in nature ; at any insect, or bird, or beast, or plant ; and show me a defect, a want of wisdom. Do this, and then I will admit that our conclusion is unsound ; but not till then.

Let those, however, who attempt this, be careful what ground they assume ; for they may find themselves fighting for the atheist. He who maintains that God's works are imperfect, that he has any plan which fails to secure its end, goes against all the reasoning of every man who has written in opposition to atheism ; and he rejects conclusions which have been demonstrated again and again. The truth is,—*if there is a God, he is perfect ; and*



*if he is perfect, his plans are ; and if his plans are, the result desired is sure of being accomplished.*

We have seen the perfection of his arrangements in our physical structure ; and we cannot avoid the conclusion, that an arrangement equally as perfect is employed in securing our eternal interests. Thus the doctrine of endless misery cannot be reconciled with the physical structure of man.

## II. INTELLECTUAL POWERS OF MAN.

I will now ask your attention to the intellectual powers of man, and the argument which they afford against the eternity of suffering.

There is no fairer way of judging of the purpose for which man was created, than by considering the end for which his powers are suited. This rule holds good whether applied to man, animals, or things inanimate. When we learn the nature of the horse, the ox, or the cow, we know the end for which they were designed. So when we know the properties of water, or of grain, we know why they were given to man.

Let us ask, therefore, what are the capacities of man ? Has he a mind capable of endless improvement ? Can he become acquainted with God, love him for his goodness, and be thankful for his mercies ? These questions all will answer in the affirmative. It is universally allowed that man is capable of indefinite improvement.

Look at the progress made in this world. The distance between Newton when an infant, and Newton unfolding the great laws of the material universe, is perhaps greater than the distance which separated him in his highest earthly elevation from an angel. But all this progress was made in a few short years, years of sorrow and

sickness, and amid numerous obstructions. What then will be the improvement of the mind, when freed from the frailties of earth; when it gazes only on bright spirits of love, drinks in knowledge from the very fountain of wisdom, and sees as with the eye of omniscience? We have as yet formed no conception of the glory and knowledge to which it will attain; and while we continue in the flesh, we can form but a faint idea in regard to its advances.

There can, therefore, be no doubt respecting the end for which mind was created. It was created that it might go on, through interminable ages, in the upward path of improvement; that "it might rise higher and still higher in infinite progression," and have its capacity perpetually enlarging. It was created that it might be absorbed in the love of Jehovah, and bow in unceasing worship and praise before his holy throne. It was created that it might love the Savior, and unite with him in sharing those splendors and joys by which he is blessed. It was created that it might love all that is excellent, and delight in those gentle offices which bind mind to mind.

"Our thoughts are boundless, though our frames are frail,  
Our souls immortal, though our limbs decay.  
Though darkened in this poor life by a veil  
Of suffering, dying matter, we shall play  
In truth's eternal sunbeams; on the way  
To heaven's high capital, our car shall roll;  
The temple of the Power whom all obey,  
That is the mark we tend to, for the soul  
Can take no lower flight, and seek no meaner goal."

Another writer has thus expressed the same exalted idea:—

"The soul on earth is an immortal guest,  
Compelled to starve at an unreal feast;  
A spark that upward tends by nature's force;  
A stream diverted from its parent source;  
A drop dissevered from the boundless sea;  
A moment parted from eternity;  
A pilgrim panting for a rest to come;  
An exile anxious for his native home."

Such was the end for which man's faculties were given. This brings us to a question of thrilling importance—*Will they be devoted to this end?*

Unless we answer this question in the affirmative, we must say God will be disappointed in his design. Now we see no such disappointment in any other part of God's works. Every bone, and muscle, and nerve in the human system, answers its end. So does every particle of matter, and every law in the material universe. Can we believe, then, that the mind will be "forever misdirected and abused; forever wasted on littleness and devoted to folly; that it will serve to adorn and secure the triumph of evil, and afford to the universe an eternal spectacle of majestic desolation, and fallen and perverted grandeur? He that takes such a ground, denies the great leading characteristic of the government of God—he denies its perfection; that one principle pervades it, one almighty power directs its operation; that in the higher, as well as lower part of the works of God, nothing is made in vain, that the means are universally adapted to the end, and the end invariably secured by the means. He says, too, that man is the only work of God which falsifies every appearance, and disappoints every expectation."\*

\* See T. S. Smith on Divine Government.

Man, then, will not be doomed to endless ignorance and sin.

The popular argument of Addison for the immortality of the soul, drawn from its desire for existence and its capacity for improvement, bears equally as strong against endless suffering as annihilation. If a desire to live eternally, and a capacity for endless improvement, are satisfactory evidence that the soul is immortal, a desire for endless happiness, proves the certainty of that happiness. Hence we cannot admit that the soul is to live forever, without admitting that it is to live in blessedness.

For this reason, I delight to hear of the greatness of Locke, Newton, and Milton. I like to see men rising above the dust of the earth, and soaring amid the stars of heaven. I rejoice to see them, like Howard, enter with a yearning tenderness and unshaken confidence into the work of reform, and seek for means by which to translate a world into light, liberty, and truth. Then I behold that in man which speaks of his glorious destiny, and which declares that the time will come, when, disenthralled from sin, he shall stand before God in the courts of heaven.

Do I hear one say, man often gives himself up to folly and sin; and why may he not be eternally their slave? I answer, here the mind is united to a body, by which it is blinded and tempted to offend: but this body we carry not into futurity. Besides, because the mind is now darkened and depraved, it is no reason for saying it will be always thus; for how many thousands, who are now walking in the light of truth, were once the slaves of ignorance and sin! The fact that some

are now misemploying their time and talents, is no evidence that such will always be their condition. Some have turned from sin, and others may turn. It will not do to say, God will, after a certain period, prevent their turning and improving; for the moment they cease to be moral agents, they cease to be accountable and criminal. Hence, if God should ever prevent any from turning to him, his government would present the strange spectacle of a holy, righteous and just God compelling the soul to be ignorant and to oppose him!

Besides, we have no evidence that God will thus change the character of his government. All that he is now doing is to purify, elevate, improve and bless. If, therefore, the time ever comes, when he seeks to corrupt, degrade, and curse, he will be a different God from what he now is. What should we think of the father who should compel his son to live in ignorance, because he had neglected to improve his time, as he ought, for a month or year? God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; the purpose which he formed in the beginning, he is directing events to accomplish; and this he will seek, till the end first contemplated is fully gained.

In a word, if it is the great principle of God not to create in vain; if he makes nothing for show or useless ornament; if even the wastes of the desert and the barren mountain are useful; shall we say, the mind, the immortal mind, the noblest work of God, and that for which all other things were created, was made in vain; and that while everything else answers its end, this, so far as millions are concerned, will disappoint all the

expectations of God and men? Believe this who can. I could as soon believe in atheism!

No man should ever countenance an opinion which destroys the perfection of God and of his government; and yet, the perfection of God's government is the very point at issue between us and the advocates for the eternity of suffering.

### III. THE SYMPATHETIC NATURE OF MAN.

I will invite your attention while I proceed to show that endless suffering cannot be reconciled with the sympathetic nature of man. It will require but little argument to sustain this position. We all have hearts full of tenderness and love; hearts which yearn at the sight of misery, and shudder at the thought of endless wo. It matters not what may be the character of those we see in wretchedness; they may be thieves and robbers, murderers and pirates; still our hearts bleed at every pore when we see them suffering the consequences of their transgressions. The child that wanders from home into the labyrinths of sin and folly is still beloved by its mother; has still a place in her warmest affections; and is to her the same being which in infancy she pressed to her bosom and caressed with inexpressible delight. And think ye that any child could be so far gone in wickedness that the mother would have no desire to restore it; that she would not use every effort, and make any sacrifice, to bring it back? Every hearer will answer, no. And yet, there are those who think that God, the fountain of all that is kind and affectionate in man, and whose goodness is a boundless ocean, while ours is a mere drop, will not restore his children, when he has the wisdom and power so to do! But such

an idea is directly opposed to our sympathetic nature. No stream can rise higher than the fountain ; and as no man can be reconciled to endless suffering, it is the height of absurdity to say God will inflict it.

It is our nature to rejoice with those who rejoice, and to weep with those who weep. The more we have of the spirit of religion, the more we have of this Christian sympathy. Hence, when we are perfected in love, the sight of misery will be infinitely more painful than it now is. The mother who should see her son expiring upon a gallows, would be far more miserable than a stranger, because her love would be greater. Hence it is, that, when God would express his affection for the world, he likens it to a mother's, and says—"Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee, saith the Lord." And still we are daily told that God will forget.

A few years since, the prison at Auburn, N. Y., was discovered, at the hour of midnight, to be enveloped in flames. The citizens flew to the relief of the convicts ; and among those who went were the professors and students of the theological seminary of the place. The devouring element was raging with increasing fury, and it was soon perceived that the prisoners must either be released or destroyed by the fire. Then, of course, was the time for human sympathy to assert its power ; then creeds and confessions of faith were forgotten, and instantly the cry was shouted by one of the professors, "Let out the prisoners—

let out the prisoners!" and the same cry was echoed and re-echoed till every convict was released. And yet, these very men imagine, that, when they shall be seated in a world of bliss, they can look down upon these same prisoners, and see them burning in a fire infinitely more dreadful than any of which we can conceive, and know that they are destined to remain in it forever and ever, and yet sing hallelujah, and praise God for securing their damnation. Possibly they are sincere in such professions; but unless they become demons, they will again raise the cry—"Let out the prisoners—let out the prisoners!" and this cry will be continued, until every one is set free. Here is an argument that never has been answered, and it never can be. It is impossible to conceive of any way in which a human being can be happy, while he knows that his child is in infinite torture. Suppose we had a furnace here like Nebuchadnezzar's, and one of the children of this congregation should be seen burning therein; think you we should sit in quietness and let it perish? Think any believer in endless misery could do it? How, then, are any to sit in heaven, and see their children burning in endless suffering? How are any to shout the praises of God, and lift up their voices in loud hallelujahs, while they behold their children rolling in unceasing fire?

Do you say, they will be reconciled to God's will? I answer, God has no such will; and if any are endlessly lost, it will be in opposition to his will. It is God's will that all men should be saved; and as he is unchangeable, his will cannot alter.



Do you say, the saints will see the justice of the misery inflicted, and in consequence of this rejoice? I reply, why then does not the Christian mother rejoice when she sees her rebel son justly expire upon the gallows? It is impossible to rejoice in the misery of a human being, unless we have the heart of a fiend.

I have a question to ask here. If the endless punishment of sinners is such a matter of rejoicing, why do those parents, who believe their children have gone to hell, go weeping in unutterable sorrow all their days? There are, I know, but few who apply their doctrine to themselves and friends, and that say, when any of their children die in sin, they have gone to hell. It is a blessed circumstance that, in such cases, the afflicted seek refuge in Universalism, and settle down in the belief that God will do all things right—in other words, save those whose loss they mourn. I have known limitarian preachers, deacons and exhorters, bury profligate children, and yet not mourn without hope; but say, God is merciful and good, and he will do all things for the best. Thus they seek refuge in Universalism; they hope, in spite of their religion.

I never knew but one limitarian who was consistent under such circumstances. It was a lady. She had buried an only daughter, and, though an excellent child, she had not been miraculously converted; and, according to the mother's creed, there was no chance for her. The dreadful idea haunted the mother continually; she became pale, emaciated, and wretched; she acted and felt like a mother who had a child in endless wo. She *was not light*, and trifling, and mirthful, like thou-

sands of the same creed who have buried unbelieving children. But why all this deep sorrow, this weeping night and day, if the endless suffering of our children is such a matter of rejoicing? How can this mother be happy in heaven, since she was so miserable here? Can this question be answered?

I wish to inquire, also, if the endless misery of our friends is such a matter of rejoicing, why it is that limitarian ministers, when called to a funeral of one who died in sin, do not expatiate upon his torture, and upon the happiness which the survivors will experience, should they get to heaven, in looking upon the lost in hell? Mourners need comfort; they need consolation; and if this is the consolation of the gospel, why not administer it at the house of mourning? When I address mourners, I always seek to comfort them by preaching the gospel. And yet I have known only two instances where limitarians preached out fully their sentiments at a funeral.

One of these was in perfect keeping with the doctrine. The person dead had been a very wicked man, and, according to partialism, had gone to an endless hell. The minister, like an honest man, said so. He pictured the torment of the lost one; described its intensity, its duration, and the hopeless condition in which he was at that moment placed. And so consoled were the mourners, that the widow fainted, and the eldest daughter was thrown into a fit, and the people of every sect were indignant! Now that man was consistent—he did just what all should do who believe this creed—he preached and applied it in the house of mourning.

I like consistency. I can see no reason why the torments of hell should be made the theme of discourse year after year; why they should be preached from the pulpit, and sinners pointed out, and made to gaze upon their fearful doom, and still never applied in the house of mourning! This appears especially inconsistent, when we are told that saints will sing praise to God for having decreed the endless torture of their nearest friends! Why not give these delightful consolations to the mourning family? Why keep back such words of comfort?

You see—you see how it is. The doctrine cannot be applied. If it were, ministers would be driven indignantly from the pulpit, and treated as miserable comforters indeed.

It is impossible, then, to reconcile the eternity of suffering with the sympathy of the human heart. Mankind will be all one in heaven, or one in hell. It is impossible to divide them, and make one part happy and the other unhappy. Why, a single groan from the pit of despair would hush in endless silence every voice of the redeemed, and make them throw aside their golden harps in horror! Did you ever hear the cry of real despair—one of its deep moans? I remember, a few months since, a degraded father was dragged, late at night, from his wretched home to prison. His children followed after, crying through the streets, *O father! father!!* I can now hear that cry of grief—it is still ringing in my ears. But what is that, compared to the cry which will go up from the pit of endless woe? Talk not, therefore, of joy, of shouting the praise of God, under such circumstances. There is more joy in heaven over one

sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.

This conclusion, to which we have come by reasoning upon the physical structure, the intellectual faculties, and the sympathetic nature of man, has the express sanction of the Bible. Hear the apostle Paul :—

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.”—(1 Cor. xii. 13—20, 26.) Thus all men constitute one body, just as all the different parts of the human system are one body.

He has the same idea in these words :—“As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are

heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”—(1 Cor. xv. 48, 49.) The same apostle says, “Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together, for a habitation of God through the Spirit.”—(Ephes. ii. 19—22.)

In the same epistle, we find this sentiment, if possible, more clearly expressed :—“There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”—(Eph. iv. 4—6, 11—13, 16.)

How vast this superstructure! It is to be composed of all men. Does any one doubt this truth? If so, I would inquire why the foundation was

laid for such a structure, if it is not to be reared ? What would you think of the man who should make his foundation twice as large as the house to stand upon it ? Would you call him wise ? But will you charge that upon God which you would not charge upon man ? If not, you must own that as Christ died for all men, all will be included in that vast building, which will grow unto a holy temple in the Lord.

## SERMON IV.

THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS WO IRRECONCILABLE  
WITH REASON.

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Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?  
—LUKE xii. 57.

THE great pre-eminence of man above the brute creation results from his powers of reason. It is this faculty which enables him to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, and constitutes him a moral and an accountable creature. Hence, man is uniformly addressed in the Bible as a reasonable being, and called upon to exercise the exalted powers by which he is distinguished.

Sometimes man permits his reason to slumber, or to become the slave of error and superstition. Such was the case with those to whom our text was addressed. They lived in the times of the Messiah, and were surrounded by the brightest evidences of his divine commission. They saw the eyes of the blind opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the predictions of the prophets *meeting their fulfilment*; and yet, such was their

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stupidity, that they did not believe. For this Jesus reproved them, and declared that they not only ought to be convinced by the signs of the times, but that of themselves they should judge what was right.

This declaration of Him who cannot err, is a full refutation of the idea which declares it wrong to reason on the subject of religion, and shows that Jesus never sought thus to degrade the human mind. So far from this, he called upon people to exercise reason, to hear and judge for themselves, and examine with care what was taught. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The same call is made by all the inspired teachers:—"Come now, and let us reason together"—"Prove all things"—"Try the spirits, and see whether they be of God." Not only are we thus required to reason, but even to judge of the ways of God, and decide whether they are equal or unequal.

I wish not to be understood by these remarks as exalting reason above revelation, or as saying that reason is a sufficient guide in the concerns of faith and practice. It is the office of reason to judge of what God has said—to weigh testimony. Thus reason and revelation go hand in hand. Without the former, the latter would be of no use; and without the latter, the former, as all history shows, would be a poor guide. It has been well said, that what a telescope is to the eye, revelation is to the reason; and that man who takes away reason to make way for the light of revelation, is like him who plucks out his eyes, the better to receive the light of the invisible stars by the aid of a telescope. It is, then, the duty of all men to



an idea is directly opposed to our sympathetic nature. No stream can rise higher than the fountain ; and as no man can be reconciled to endless suffering, it is the height of absurdity to say God will inflict it.

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Do you say, they will be reconciled to God's will? I answer, God has no such will; and if any are endlessly lost, it will be in opposition to his will. It is God's will that all men should be saved; and as he is unchangeable, his will cannot alter.

Do you say, the saints will see the justice of the misery inflicted, and in consequence of this rejoice? I reply, why then does not the Christian mother rejoice when she sees her rebel son justly expire upon the gallows? It is impossible to rejoice in the misery of a human being, unless we have the heart of a fiend.

I have a question to ask here. If the endless punishment of sinners is such a matter of rejoicing, why do those parents, who believe their children have gone to hell, go weeping in unutterable sorrow all their days? There are, I know, but few who apply their doctrine to themselves and friends, and that say, when any of their children die in sin, they have gone to hell. It is a blessed circumstance that, in such cases, the afflicted seek refuge in Universalism, and settle down in the belief that God will do all things right—in other words, save those whose loss they mourn. I have known limitarian preachers, deacons and exhorters, bury profligate children, and yet not mourn without hope; but say, God is merciful and good, and he will do all things for the best. Thus they seek refuge in Universalism; they hope, in spite of their religion.

I never knew but one limitarian who was consistent under such circumstances. It was a lady. She had buried an only daughter, and, though an excellent child, she had not been miraculously converted; and, according to the mother's creed, there was no chance for her. The dreadful idea haunted the mother continually; she became pale, emaciated, and wretched; she acted and felt like a mother who had a child in endless woe. She was not light, and trifling, and mirthful, like thou-

sands of the same creed who have buried unbelieving children. But why all this deep sorrow, this weeping night and day, if the endless suffering of our children is such a matter of rejoicing? How can this mother be happy in heaven, since she was so miserable here? Can this question be answered?

I wish to inquire, also, if the endless misery of our friends is such a matter of rejoicing, why it is that limitarian ministers, when called to a funeral of one who died in sin, do not expatiate upon his torture, and upon the happiness which the survivors will experience, should they get to heaven, in looking upon the lost in hell? Mourners need comfort; they need consolation; and if this is the consolation of the gospel, why not administer it at the house of mourning? When I address mourners, I always seek to comfort them by preaching the gospel. And yet I have known only two instances where limitarians preached out fully their sentiments at a funeral.

One of these was in perfect keeping with the doctrine. The person dead had been a very wicked man, and, according to partialism, had gone to an endless hell. The minister, like an honest man, said so. He pictured the torment of the lost one; described its intensity, its duration, and the hopeless condition in which he was at that moment placed. And so consoled were the mourners, that the widow fainted, and the eldest daughter was thrown into a fit, and the people of every sect were indignant! Now that man was consistent—he did just what all should do who believe this creed—he preached and applied it in the house of mourning.

I like consistency. I can see no reason why the torments of hell should be made the theme of discourse year after year; why they should be preached from the pulpit, and sinners pointed out, and made to gaze upon their fearful doom, and still never applied in the house of mourning! This appears especially inconsistent, when we are told that saints will sing praise to God for having decreed the endless torture of their nearest friends! Why not give these delightful consolations to the mourning family? Why keep back such words of comfort?

You see—you see how it is. The doctrine cannot be applied. If it were, ministers would be driven indignantly from the pulpit, and treated as miserable comforters indeed.

It is impossible, then, to reconcile the eternity of suffering with the sympathy of the human heart. Mankind will be all one in heaven, or one in hell. It is impossible to divide them, and make one part happy and the other unhappy. Why, a single groan from the pit of despair would hush in endless silence every voice of the redeemed, and make them throw aside their golden harps in horror! Did you ever hear the cry of real despair—one of its deep moans? I remember, a few months since, a degraded father was dragged, late at night, from his wretched home to prison. His children followed after, crying through the streets, *O father! father!!* I can now hear that cry of grief—it is still ringing in my ears. But what is that, compared to the cry which will go up from the pit of endless woe? Talk not, therefore, of joy, of shouting the praise of God, under such circumstances. There is more joy in heaven over one

sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.

This conclusion, to which we have come by reasoning upon the physical structure, the intellectual faculties, and the sympathetic nature of man, has the express sanction of the Bible. Hear the apostle Paul :—

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.”—(1 Cor. xii. 13—20, 26.) Thus all men constitute one body, just as all the different parts of the human system are one body.

He has the same idea in these words :—“As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are

heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."—(1 Cor. xv. 48, 49.) The same apostle says, "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together, for a habitation of God through the Spirit."—(Ephes. ii. 19—22.)

In the same epistle, we find this sentiment, if possible, more clearly expressed :—"There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."—(Eph. iv. 4—6, 11—13, 16.)

How vast this superstructure! It is to be composed of all men. Does any one doubt this truth? If so, I would inquire why the foundation was

laid for such a structure, if it is not to be reared? What would you think of the man who should make his foundation twice as large as the house to stand upon it? Would you call him wise? But will you charge that upon God which you would not charge upon man? If not, you must own that as Christ died for all men, all will be included in that vast building, which will grow unto a holy temple in the Lord.



## SERMON IV.

THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS WO IRRECONCILABLE  
WITH REASON.

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Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?  
—LUKE xii. 57.

THE great pre-eminence of man above the brute creation results from his powers of reason. It is this faculty which enables him to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, and constitutes him a moral and an accountable creature. Hence, man is uniformly addressed in the Bible as a reasonable being, and called upon to exercise the exalted powers by which he is distinguished.

Sometimes man permits his reason to slumber, or to become the slave of error and superstition. Such was the case with those to whom our text was addressed. They lived in the times of the Messiah, and were surrounded by the brightest evidences of his divine commission. They saw the eyes of the blind opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the predictions of the prophets *meeting their fulfilment*; and yet, such was their

stupidity, that they did not believe. For this Jesus reproved them, and declared that they not only ought to be convinced by the signs of the times, but that of themselves they should judge what was right.

This declaration of Him who cannot err, is a full refutation of the idea which declares it wrong to reason on the subject of religion, and shows that Jesus never sought thus to degrade the human mind. So far from this, he called upon people to exercise reason, to hear and judge for themselves, and examine with care what was taught. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The same call is made by all the inspired teachers:—"Come now, and let us reason together"—"Prove all things"—"Try the spirits, and see whether they be of God." Not only are we thus required to reason, but even to judge of the ways of God, and decide whether they are equal or unequal.

I wish not to be understood by these remarks as exalting reason above revelation, or as saying that reason is a sufficient guide in the concerns of faith and practice. It is the office of reason to judge of what God has said—to weigh testimony. Thus reason and revelation go hand in hand. Without the former, the latter would be of no use; and without the latter, the former, as all history shows, would be a poor guide. It has been well said, that what a telescope is to the eye, revelation is to the reason; and that man who takes away reason to make way for the light of revelation, is like him who plucks out his eyes, the better to receive the light of the invisible stars by the aid of a telescope. It is, then, the duty of all men to

judge for themselves; and in this discourse I propose to offer some arguments, drawn from reason, against the eternity of suffering.

I will first ask your attention to the admissions of those who hold to the eternity of misery. Whenever we offer an argument against their doctrine, and declare it wholly incompatible with the Divine character, we are met with the reply, that reason is carnal, and, therefore, the fact that such a torture appears unreasonable, is no argument against it. It is said that we should believe it, though it contradicts all our sense of right, and appears like the height of injustice.

Those who take this ground, call upon us to make an entire surrender of reason, and not exercise it at all in regard to matters of religion. In times of religious excitements, the great object sought is to make the people give up reason, and trust wholly to feeling; and it is not until this is accomplished that those excited and terrified will fall prostrate under the power exerted over them.

Now, I ask whether a doctrine, which cannot be embraced till reason is surrendered, is worthy of support? Can such a doctrine be from God? Why, brethren, God is a reasonable being—he is just and right in all his ways—righteousness and truth go before his face—his dealings are all perfectly equitable. Wherein, then, is the necessity of surrendering reason, in order to believe the doctrines he has published? Why do not his doctrines accord with the reason which he has given us?

Do I hear one say, reason is carnal, and not to be trusted! I reply, on many subjects in theology,

what is called carnal reason agrees with the reason of those who pretend to be specially illuminated. This is an important consideration, and I ask your special attention here. Suppose my reason is carnal; how does it happen that it does not deny the existence of God, his wisdom, power, love, mercy, goodness and grace? - Why does it not pronounce those precepts unreasonable which require us to love God and worship in his sanctuary, and pray for his blessing? Why does it admit the justice of those requisitions which make it our duty to love each other fervently, and do as we would be done by? On these great matters, carnal reason, as it is called, agrees with what is termed sanctified reason? Now why should they agree here? Why not disagree on these topics, as well as on the duration of torture? Why should my carnal reason see so many things in the same light in which sanctified reason sees them? Suppose here is a colored glass, through which we all look at certain objects; would the objects to some be tinged with one color, and to others with a different one? You answer, they would be all of the same hue. So with reason. If, in consequence of its carnality, it sees some religious subjects entirely wrong, why should it not see them all wrong?

These questions show that the doctrine to which we object is of a different character from the other doctrines to which we have referred, and that the fault is not in our reason, but in the doctrine itself. That is unreasonable, and wars against all true ideas of justice and goodness. It is not only *our* reason that says this, but it is the reason of all men that says it. The most

strenuous advocates of the doctrine in question call it a mystery—the strange work of God, and declare that it opposes all their ideas of mercy and goodness. But though thus mysterious and strange, they think it taught in the Bible, and therefore believe it.

Thus, sanctified reason, as well as carnal reason, declares that this doctrine is false. Reason utters but one voice on the subject, and that is the voice of utter condemnation. I know not how this subject may appear to you, but I am frank to confess that I cannot admit a doctrine Divine which wars against the reason of all men, and which cannot be held but at the entire surrender of reason. Reason, I admit, cannot comprehend all truth—it cannot find the Almighty out to perfection; but all it can see of truth accords perfectly with its sense of justice and equity. Now is it not much more proper to conclude that the part which we cannot comprehend of truth accords with the part we can comprehend, than that they are entirely different in their character? All Divine truth is consistent with itself—one part cannot clash with another; and the man who has obtained one truth, has a rule by which to decide in regard to all truth. But, according to the doctrine of endless misery, different parts of the system of truth are directly at variance; it contains antagonistic principles, between which there is no more harmony than between light and darkness, truth and error. Certainly, I cannot subscribe to such an idea; and no man has any authority for teaching it. All truth is from the same source, and consequently harmonious in all its parts.

I object, then, to the doctrine of endless suffering, because it is unreasonable; and because we are obliged to deny reason, before we can give it our support. I wish for a doctrine which I can adopt in the calm and deliberate exercise of judgment; and which I shall prize in proportion to the knowledge which I have of it. I wish a doctrine that I can investigate, and in which my confidence will increase as I advance in my investigations. This is the case with Universalism. It is embraced, not in a moment of phrensy, when highly excited and terrified, and after having made an entire surrender of reason; but it is embraced after a full and careful investigation—such an investigation as we would make of any new astronomical system presented for our belief.

Look at the large number of clergymen among us, who were once believers in endless suffering. They rejected the doctrine they had preached, after a full investigation, and when free from every excitement unfavorable to the right exercise of reason. I look around upon this congregation, and see hundreds here, that once believed in endless torture, and many of which were connected with churches holding to that opinion; but they were led to examine our system, and, after examining, they fully and cordially embraced it. Let others examine it, and the result will be the same. So certain are we of this, that we constantly court investigation. This is all we ask. But we cannot get this. People are not allowed to read our books and hear our preachers. The most untiring and active measures are employed to prejudice people against our faith. But why this attempt to create prejudice, if a candid inves-

tigation is not feared? The truth is, our doctrine is known to be reasonable, and to stand the test of inquiry. Hence everything is done which can be to make people distrust reason, surrender it entirely, and be governed wholly by feeling. This admission ought to convince all men that the doctrine of endless suffering has no foundation in truth; that it cannot be of God, but originated with man.

This conclusion will be confirmed by considering,

I. That it is unreasonable to suppose God will punish a finite creature with endless misery. It is impossible to discover any resemblance to justice in such a punishment. Justice would proportion punishment to the guilt of the offender. This is the idea which all men have of justice. We do not punish the offences of a child with the severity we do the offences of a man. Neither do we punish a trifling offence as severely as we do an aggravated one. Thus, punishment is always proportioned to crime. But if thus proportioned, how can any be doomed to endless suffering? Is not man finite? This is not a matter of dispute—all are agreed with regard to this. Hence, when it is said God will punish man endlessly for sins committed in this life, he is accused of infinite injustice, and represented as administering punishment without any reference to the magnitude of sin. We cannot, then, see a shadow of justice in the infliction of endless pain; for such a punishment bears no proportion to sin. That is endless, but the sins are finite.

It has been argued that the degree of misery will be in proportion to the degree of sin; that

there will be all grades of condition, from that of comparatively light suffering, down to perfect wretchedness; that those who suffer the lightest degree of misery will be only one step removed from those occupying the lowest state among the blessed; and this is called being punished according to the deeds.

This is essentially different from the popular view of punishment. According to that, all sins are infinite, and will be punished with infinite agony. But here is a false assumption. It is false to say sin is infinite; for nothing can be infinite which proceeds from a finite cause. It is equally false to say all sin is measured by the greatness of the being offended; for the Bible, reason, and conscience declare that every man is guilty according to his intentions, and the light against which he acts. To whom much is given, of him much shall be required. Some shall be beaten with many stripes, and some with few. Hence sin is finite, because the act of a finite creature. Punishment, then, cannot be infinite in degree, as some teach.

But can it be endless in duration, if suited in degree to the magnitude of the crime? I ask particular attention to this question, because the day is not far distant when this will be the prevailing doctrine among those who now hold to the eternity of suffering. Allow me to submit this question for your attention—*Why would it be any more proper to punish a finite sin endlessly, than with a punishment infinite in degree?* Suppose a case. Here is a man who has stolen twenty dollars. He is arraigned for trial, found guilty, and sentenced to receive two hundred lashes.



This we should call the very extreme of cruelty, and cry out with a voice of indignation against the court which should order it. But suppose the punishment should be imprisonment for life; would that render the case less aggravated? Would it not be vastly more unjust to punish for life such an offence, than to punish it with two hundred stripes? Let us change the court which is to inflict the punishment. Suppose the man goes into the future world with this crime upon his soul; would it be any more just in God to doom him to endless misery than for an earthly tribunal to doom him to imprisonment for life? The truth is, the *duration*, as well as the *degree* of punishment, must be proportioned to the crime. All human tribunals act upon this principle. All offenders are not doomed to the same period of suffering; but the periods vary according to the offence committed. If you look into our prisons, you will find some sentenced there for one year, some for two years, some for five, and some for life. The duration of the punishment is fixed according to the crime committed. By what authority, then, can any say punishment will be endless? God declares that he will punish men according to their deeds—that is, the punishment shall be measured by the sin of which we are guilty; but will it be, if a finite sin is punished endlessly?

Suppose, for instance, a parent, who believes in endless misery, has a boy that has told a daring falsehood. The parent is an acquaintance of mine, and he asks my advice with regard to the punishment which should be inflicted. I tell him that the sin is very great, and that he ought

to doom his son to confinement for life. The father is horror-struck—he calls me a barbarian—he rejects my advice with indignation.

Suppose another case. Here is a boy, of the same age, lying upon a sick bed. He tells the same falsehood which the other one told, and he dies with that falsehood upon his soul. A person, knowing the facts, submits the case to this very father, who had called me a barbarian for saying his son should be imprisoned for life. After considering the subject, the father says the boy should be doomed to endless punishment; that justice demands such a sentence. Thus he says a sin which it would be barbarity for man to punish for life, 'God will punish endlessly'

What an inconsistency! Who would suppose men of judgment could ever adopt such sentiments? Reason, then, teaches that God will not inflict endless pain. He is a God of justice, and will proportion punishment to the magnitude of sin; and as sin is finite, punishment will be limited.

II. Reason teaches that God will never do what he forbids his people to do. The doctrine that laws are made for the people, and not for kings, we have all abandoned. We cannot, therefore, subscribe to the idea, that God has principles of action which would be sinful in us.

Let me ask, then, what would be sinful in us? I answer, 1. It would be sinful to seek the evil of any human being. 2. It would be sinful to render evil for evil. 3. It would be sinful not to render assistance to those perishing with want, when we have the means of relieving them. The

Christian rules on these points are so plain, that I need not refer to them. All, of every sect, will readily assent to what I have stated. But if right in regard to these points, I see no way in which we can differ respecting the course which God will pursue ; for if it is wrong in us to seek the evil of any human being, it is wrong in God ; if wrong in us to render evil for evil, it is wrong in God ; and if wrong in us, not to assist those who are perishing with want, it is wrong in God. These are self-evident conclusions, which we cannot deny, without denying the leading rules of Christianity.

Let us suppose, then, that God made a certain number for endless perdition ; that he singled them out for this end ; and that it is certain those thus selected will never be saved ; does he not act upon a principle which would be sinful in us ?

Allow me to illustrate by a simile. A father has ten sons. Five he nourishes, clothes, educates and protects ; the other five he treats the reverse : he imposes unreasonable burdens upon them ; keeps them in confinement, and compels them to toil beyond the endurance of nature ; should we not pronounce him one of the most cruel and heartless of all human beings ? Should we not say, he inflicted the greatest possible injustice upon five of his children ? Apply this case to Deity. If he makes a part happy, and drives the other part down to endless agony, is he not cruel—does he not seek the evil of some—does he not inflict the worst torture possible on the unfortunate part of his creation ?

Let none say, the misery of a part contributes to the welfare of the other part ; for the cruel

father could justify himself in the same manner; he could say—the earnings of the five in confinement, are expended upon the other five. Neither let it be said, God, in his plan of grace, found it necessary to make a part miserable; for a being of infinite perfection, could labor under no such necessity; he has all wisdom, power and fulness; and, therefore, can give happiness to all with the same ease that he can give happiness to one. Reason, therefore, shows that God made none for misery; for that would have been as wrong as for you or me to seek the evil of our fellow-beings.

Again: let us suppose that God says to the sinner, when he enters the future life, “Sinner, you have always done evil—you have despised me, and violated my law, and trampled upon the rights of your fellow-beings; and now I must doom you to endless pain.” What might be said on hearing such a sentence pronounced? Might it not be asked, what benefit will result from such a punishment? Will it reflect honor on the Divine name? Will it give stability to the Divine throne? Is it essential to the accomplishment of any good end? The answer would be, no. For what, then, it might be asked, will it be inflicted? There is only one reply that can be made. It is inflicted simply because the sinner has done evil; and, therefore, it is rendering evil for evil; cursing for cursing. Now God commands us not to act upon this principle; he requires us to overcome evil with good; to render blessing for cursing. Shall we say, then, that God is the greatest violator of his own laws; that instead of seeking to overcome evil with good, he renders *endless evil for the evil man commits on earth?* There

is then no vindictive punishment; God will never punish in revenge; he will always punish for a benevolent purpose; and, consequently, he will doom none to endless suffering.

Again. Let us suppose that though God did not create man for misery, and will not inflict upon him endless torture, he will allow him to destroy his own eternal interests; can we reconcile such a course with the Christian precepts? This is a plain question. Christianity requires all to do as they would be done by, to help the needy and relieve the distressed; and it pronounces the man a cold, heartless wretch who will stand still and see a fellow-being perish, when by proper effort his life could be saved.

Suppose a case. A vessel is returning from sea; all on board are in health, and are cheered by the prospect of reaching home in a few days. At length one of the crew sees a wreck far ahead, which he watches with anxious care. He soon discovers men clinging to the same, waving their signals of distress. Information is communicated to the commander; but he heeds it not, and disdainfully declares that he will grant no assistance. The crew press around him, and beg that he will not leave the men to perish; but his heart is unmoved. Even the cries of the unfortunate sufferers affect him not; and in a selfishness that cannot feel, he passes directly by. Soon he reaches his destined port, and the particulars of his conduct spread as on the wings of light. The public are indignant, and pronounce the man a barbarian, guilty of one of the worst sins which could disgrace the earth. Now, could the conduct of this man be reconciled with the Christian precepts? Was he

not bound by the laws of Heaven to render aid? Here there is no difference of opinion. Did not our whole country condemn, as with one voice, the captain who saw the ill-fated Lexington in flames, and yet went not to proffer assistance?

Apply this case to Deity. God can save all men; he can do all his pleasure; and yet, we are told that he will allow the sinner to be swept, by the strong current of sin, down the gulf of endless ruin; that though a single word would prevent such a catastrophe, he will not speak it, but leave man to himself! Thus the very conduct is ascribed to God, which our whole country has unanimously condemned in man. According to this, God violates the laws he has given for our guidance, and punishes us for refusing to assist the unfortunate, when he will not assist those plunging into endless perdition! And, strange to say, men justify him in so doing, and that too, when they would brand with infamy the man who should stand still and allow the most degraded wretch on earth to perish.

Reason is shocked at such a conclusion, and rejects it with abhorrence. God, therefore, will never violate the principles which he has given for our guidance; and, if so, he will neither inflict nor permit endless torture.

III. Reason teaches that God would not adopt, as a remedy for sin, a greater evil than sin. This proposition is within the comprehension of the humblest capacity. The surgeon, in treating a sprained limb, would not adopt a course which would render amputation necessary. The oculist, in treating a slightly diseased eye, would not order medicines which would destroy it. The

parent, in correcting his truant son, would not inflict a punishment, that would drive him into all manner of sin. Every man will assent to the correctness of this principle; and yet, according to the doctrine of endless punishment, it is entirely disregarded by the Almighty. He has chosen a remedy infinitely worse than the disease; he has threatened a punishment which will cause more sin and suffering than it will prevent. Now no law is far preferable to such an one. It is infinitely better to let mankind go on eternally, as their desires lead and their natural sense of right dictates, than attempt to guide them by means which produce more evil than good.

It does not remove the difficulty, to say, "the remedy saves some, and renders their condition infinitely blessed;" for even God cannot be justified in making one endlessly happy at the expense of another. It is compatible with justice and goodness to employ the temporary blindness of one to promote the spiritual good of another, providing this blindness also works out the good of the one who endures it; but not without. He that compels me to toil for another, without in some way compensating me for that toil, does me so much wrong.

A righteous God, then, could not adopt such a system; it is fraught with injustice, and is cruel in the highest degree. It is doing evil that good may come—a principle which the Bible condemns, and which has been one of the greatest curses ever known on earth. The Judge of the earth deals by all alike; all are the objects of his regard; all are embraced in his plan of mercy. In human governments, I know, some are sacrificed for the

public good ; but this arises from the imperfection attending such governments, and is no proof that God, who is perfect, and can accomplish all his pleasure, will make any such sacrifice without overruling it for the good of the one sacrificed.

I say, therefore, again, the remedy cannot be worse than the evil it was designed to correct. Consequently, endless suffering is not the punishment of sin.

IV. Reason teaches that God would not permit the existence of an unnecessary endless evil. This position is admitted by our opposers. Dr. Parker, in his Lectures \* against Universalism, reasons thus: "*Universalists argue that endless misery cannot be for the good of the universe. This is the very thing which ought to be proved.*" Here he allows that if it were not necessary we should be right in rejecting it. But how does he prove its necessity? We answer, by *asserting* that it has a better restraining influence than limited punishment. It would be easy to show the falsity of this assertion; but such a labor is foreign from our present purpose. We will, therefore, proceed by asking, whether it was not possible for Jehovah to restrain sinners without the aid of endless punishment? Possible! Why, all know that it was possible. He can do all his pleasure. He can give just what effect he desires to limited punishments, soften the heart by a manifestation of kindness, and enlighten the mind by a proclamation of truth. Hence, endless woe is not necessary; it is not an evil with which God cannot dispense.

\* See Lectures by Joel Parker, D. D., President of the Union Theological Seminary, N. Y., 1841.



This all will admit; for an infinite Ruler can accomplish all his purposes; he is not obliged to suffer an evil which he would prefer to avoid; he is not reduced to the expedient of choosing between two evils.

Dr. Parker also says, "*For aught we know, endless suffering may be necessary for securing the saints against falling, in a future state.*" "For aught we know!" What a conjecture! What support does it receive from the Bible? Where is it intimated that the only way to keep the saints from rushing into sin, is by compelling them to gaze constantly upon the damned in endless perdition? What inspired writer has said the songs of heaven would cease, and its inhabitants rise in rebellion against God, were it not for the groans and agonies of hell? And yet, on this strange conjecture—a conjecture of which the Bible is ignorant, and which reflects infinite dishonor on the redeemed—rests the doctrine of endless misery.

You may think, perhaps, that better arguments could be offered in support of the necessity of endless wo. Why, then, are they not produced? Our opposers have been pressed for years on this point. All the writers against Universalism have given it their attention; and yet, what we have noticed is the sum of all they have advanced, if we except the idea that the sufferings of hell are necessary to the welfare of the inhabitants of the planets!

Such is the weakness of error. While it confidently asserts that some will be doomed to endless wo, it can show no good arising from that wo; and thus it makes God the author of an in-

finite evil, which does no good to any being in the universe. We repeat, therefore, *endless misery is an unnecessary evil—it does no good—it is no advantage to God, Christ, the angels, the saints, or the damned—it accomplishes nothing which could not be accomplished without it.*

V. Reason teaches that God cannot have two attributes at variance with each other. Such a variance would prove an imperfection in Deity. If, for instance, the demands of justice conflict with those of mercy, one or the other makes an improper demand; and that which makes an improper demand must be wrong.

I know it will be said, "justice simply requires that an equitable punishment should be inflicted; and that mercy interposes, and asks to have the sinner forgiven; and therefore, though at variance, both are right." But how right? How can it be right that the claims of justice should be denied? Why should the stability of a righteous government be destroyed by interposing a barrier against the operations of justice? What can justify screening a culprit from the punishment due to his offences?

Perhaps it will be argued, that, unless mercy interposes, all will be doomed to endless woe, since all are sinners; and, consequently, such an interposition is essential to salvation. This only increases the difficulty; for it shows that all who are saved are saved at the expense of justice, and all who are damned are damned at the expense of mercy! Hence there can be no warfare among the attributes of God; justice and mercy must be perfectly harmonious.

But to be thus harmonious, justice and mercy

must be entirely different from what is generally supposed. The one must not be cruelty, nor the other weakness. Mercy must not lift its voice against punishment, nor justice punish beyond what the good of the sinner requires. It has been well said, by Dr. Channing, that God's "justice is the justice of a good being, dwelling in the same mind, and acting in harmony with perfect benevolence. By this attribute we understand God's infinite regard to virtue or moral worth, expressed in a moral government: that is, in giving excellent and equitable laws, and in conferring such rewards, and inflicting such punishments as are most fitted to secure their observance. God's justice has for its end the highest virtue of the creation, and it punishes for this end alone; and thus it coincides with benevolence; for virtue and happiness, though not the same, are inseparably conjoined.

"God's justice, thus viewed, appears to us to be in perfect harmony with his mercy. According to the prevalent systems of theology, these attributes are so discordant and jarring, that to reconcile them is the hardest task, and the most wonderful achievement of infinite wisdom. To *us*, they seem to be intimate friends, always at peace, breathing the same spirit, and seeking the same end. By God's mercy, we understand not a blind, instinctive compassion, which forgives without reflection, and without regard to the interests of virtue. This, we acknowledge, would be incompatible with justice, and also with enlightened benevolence. God's mercy, as we understand it, desires strongly the happiness of the guilty, but

only through their penitence. It has a regard to character as truly as his justice."

The foregoing considerations are sufficient to show that the doctrine of endless misery cannot be reconciled with reason, and that it wars against all its dictates. Who, then, can believe the doctrine divine? Who will stand up in its defence? God is a reasonable being; his laws are reasonable laws; and his plan of salvation is a reasonable plan. Hence the doctrine of endless wo cannot be from God, or have any authority in his Holy Book.

## SERMON V.

### THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS MISERY NOT TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE.

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Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.—DANIEL v. 27.

IN this discourse, I shall ask your attention to the following question, viz.—*Does the Bible teach the doctrine of endless misery?* This is a question of great importance. If there is a state of ceaseless wo, all should know it, that they may see the danger to which they are exposed.

I am aware that thousands, in this city, suppose there is no doubt whatever in regard to endless suffering. So confident are they of its being a scripture doctrine, that they look upon all who differ from them as trifling with things sacred, and wilfully rejecting the truth. We do not wonder at this. We know how such persons are educated. They are deceived with respect to the words and phrases employed in the Bible to describe the punishment of sinners. They read the Bible under that deception ; and, therefore, they

entirely misapprehend its meaning, whenever it speaks of the consequences of iniquity. Here is one of the great errors of the church. Remove this, and no man would go to the Bible to prove the endlessness of suffering.

Do you say, it is unreasonable to suppose terms have been thus changed in their signification? I answer, such changes are very common in language. Let me give a few instances. "Knave" once signified a servant; and in an early translation of the New Testament, instead of "Paul the *servant*," we read, "Paul the *knave* of Jesus Christ." "Wretch" was originally, and is now in some parts of England, used as a term of softest and fondest endearment. "Villain" originally signified simply a servant or bondsman. "Hell" meant originally, concealed or covered over. Dr. Campbell says, "at first it denoted only what was secret or concealed, and is found with precisely the same meaning in all the Teutonic dialects." Dr. A. Clarke says, "The word hell comes from the Anglo-Saxon *helon*, to cover or hide; hence the tiling or slating of a house is called, in some parts of England, *heling*, to this day; and the covers of books (in Lancashire) by the same name."\*

If these words have thus changed their signification, why may not others have done the same? It is not enough, therefore, to ask how certain terms are now understood—we must know how they were used by the writers of the Bible. Grant me your attention, and I will consider some of the terms on which the doctrine of endless misery is supposed to rest.

\* See *Star of Bethlehem*, Vol. 2, No. 6.

### I. *Everlasting, Eternal, Ever, &c.*

If we turn to the Old Testament, we find that these words are often used in a limited sense. "He shall serve his master forever."—(Exod. xxi. 6.) Here forever means during life. David says, he asked life of God, and he gave it to him, even length of days forever and ever.—(Ps. xxi. 4.) This phrase signifies only a long life. Jeremiah, speaking of the calamities to come upon his enemies says, they shall stumble; they shall not prevail; they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper; their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.—(xx. 11.) Now unless this was a limited confusion, how could the prophet say, It shall never be forgotten? To forget refers to what is passed. Jonah says, "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me forever."—(Jonah ii. 6.) Here forever means three days and three nights.

If we pass from the Old Testament to the New, we find the word used in the same sense. Thus the Savior, alluding to the homes of the rich, called them *everlasting habitations*; and urged his disciples to seek the friendship of such, that they might be received to those homes. Recollect, these everlasting habitations were earthly houses.—(Luke xvi. 9.) The following expressions may be quoted without comment. "Such as was not, no, nor ever shall be."—(Matt. xxiv. 21.) "Desire him to do as he had ever done."—(Mark xv. 8.) "Son, thou art ever with me."—(Luke xv. 31.) "A man told me all things that ever I did."—(John iv. 29.) (See also John viii. 35; x. 8; viii. 20; Acts xxiii. 15; Eph. v. 29; 1 Thess. v. 16; 2 Tim. iii. 17; Mark xi. 14; Philemon xvi.) In

all these places, the terms *ever* and *forever*, signify human life, or a part of life.

If we turn to lexicographers, we shall find that their definitions fully accord with the foregoing views. Take what they say of (*aion*) *ever* and *forever*. Phavorinus says, it means, *life, existence, eternity*. Grové: *eternity; an age; life; duration or continuance of time; a period; a revolution of ages; a dispensation of Providence; this world, or life; the world or life to come*. Parkhurst defines it: *duration or continuance of time*, but with great variety. He then gives seven senses in which it is used, *two* signifying eternity and *five* a limited period. Jones is equally as favorable; he says, it means, *everlasting; age; eternity; eis ton aion, forever; a period of time; age, life, the present world; the Jewish dispensation*. Donnegan says: *time; a space of time; life time*. Odyss. 5, 152, and 160, *life*. Iliad, 22. 58. Hes. Scut. 331, the ordinary period of a man's life. Homer and Pindar frequently, the age of man, man's estate, Iliad, 24, 725, a long period of time; eternity. Schweighaeuser defines it: *ævum, vita, age, life*. Valpey: *age; length of time*. Hincks: *a period of time; life; an age; the world, eternity; same as Latin ævum, which was formed from it, by means of the digamma*. Hedericus says, it means, *ævum, æternitas, or age, eternity*. Pickering: *an age; a long period of time; indefinite duration; time whether longer or shorter, past, present or future*. Schrevilius gives the following: *ævum, mundus, sæculum, vita, or age, world, life*.

This view of these words is confirmed by the fact, that the primitive Universalists, in speaking of punishment, used the words *everlasting, eter-*



nal and ever, just as they are used in the New Testament. They threatened sinners with everlasting punishment, the same as Jesus and the apostles did. Now, would they have done this, if the words *eternal*, *everlasting*, &c., signified endless? Surely we must not charge such a man as Origen with dishonesty.

There is another fact. In Maclaine's *Mosheim* we find a note which states that the original signification of *eternal*, *ever*, &c., was *life*, *age*, &c., but *not eternity*. "The word *aion* or *aeon* is commonly used among Greek writers, but in different senses: its signification in the Gnostic system is not very evident, and several learned men have despaired of finding out its true meaning. *Aion* or *aeon* among the ancients was used to signify the age of man, or the duration of human life. In after times, it was employed by philosophers to express the duration of spiritual and invisible beings." Hence the circumstance that punishment is called everlasting and eternal is no proof whatever that it is endless. The same rule which would prove that Jesus and Paul taught endless misery by this word, would prove that Origen taught it. And yet, that he was a Universalist, is unquestionable. Here, then, is a key by which to explain all the texts where eternal and everlasting are applied to misery. Late as the year 250 these words were used by Universalists to describe the duration of punishment. Consequently, not till after that period, were they employed to teach endless misery. Therefore, they could not have been so used by Jesus and the Apostles; and those passages in which they are coupled with punishment, can be no proof of its eternity. This

argument, in our opinion, amounts to demonstration.

"Besides, those Greek fathers, who, on the contrary, did not believe in Universal salvation, and who began at length zealously to oppose that doctrine, never quoted the terms now in question, against their opponents, but resorted to other arguments. I speak of the most ancient Greek Christians; those who lived before the fifth century."

## II. *Hell.*

The controversy between Universalists and Partialists, in regard to what the Scriptures teach concerning hell, has been reduced to a small compass. The principal texts on which they differ about this word are, "Thy whole body be cast into hell."—(Matt. v. 29, 30.) "Able to destroy both soul and body in hell."—(Matt. x. 28.) "Be cast into hell fire."—Mark ix. 47.) "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?"—(Matt. xxiii. 33.) The word (*gehenna*) which in these verses is rendered hell, is the only one about which any controversy remains. The words found in Psalm ix. 17, Luke xvi. 23, 2 Peter ii. 4, are admitted not to teach endless wo. Our remarks, therefore, will be confined to the word first mentioned, (*gehenna*.)

This was originally employed to signify the valley of Hinnom, a place near Jerusalem. Here the Jews sacrificed their children to Moloch." (Josh. xv. 8.) The good king Josiah defiled Tophet, the valley of the son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or daughter pass through the fire to Moloch.—(2 Kings xxiii. 10.) He defiled it by having the offals of the city thrown into it, and burned there. It was also a custom

of the Jews to burn alive there, the worst offenders against their laws. Those less criminal were thrown into the valley and left unburied. This was considered a great disgrace, and dreaded much by all the people.

By such means Hinnom became terribly obnoxious to the Jews; and, therefore, the prophets very naturally chose it as a figure of temporal judgment. They could have selected nothing more appropriate. And as the punishments connected with this valley were more dreadful than any other, it was natural that Hinnom should have been chosen as a figure of that great judgment by which the Jewish nation was to be destroyed. Accordingly, we find the prophets representing the destruction of the Jews by a figure drawn from this valley. Thus Jeremiah says—"Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath. For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the Lord: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place. And the carcasses of the people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none

shall fray them away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem; the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate."—(Jeremiah vii. 29—34.)

Such are the two senses which *gehenna* has in the Old Testament. Here all critics are agreed. Let us pass now to the New Testament, and inquire whether it is there used in any different sense. The plan of our sermon will not allow us to take up the several texts where it occurs, and show, from their connection, that they can have no reference to futurity. We have marked out a briefer course, and one which we think will be equally as convincing and satisfactory. What we have to say will be designed to prove that this word had not acquired its present signification till after the New Testament was written. And,

1. It is not used in the Apocrypha—writings composed just before the Christian era. Its allusions to future punishment are made by a different word, (*hades*), which shows that this word (*gehenna*) was not then used in its present popular sense.

2. In all the writings extant in the period between the Old and New Testaments, future punishment is never represented by fire, but always by darkness, night, and death. This shows, therefore, that the word we are considering was not then used in its present sense; for all those writers that in after times employ it to represent hell, always speak of the place as an abode of fire.

3. Josephus, whose writings bear date between the year A. D. 70 and A. D. 100, never introduces

this word (*gehenna*) in those passages where he speaks of the state of the wicked after death, nor in any other part of his works. This brings us down to A. D. 100 ; and we find that the word we are considering had acquired no new signification. Its meaning was the same at this time as among the Jews. Consequently, it has the same signification in the New Testament that it has in the Old Testament.\*

Perhaps it will be argued that Christ gave it a new meaning. But I ask, on what occasion did he say—"I use this word differently from what the prophets did. I mean by it endless punishment?" Such a statement was essential to prevent his being misunderstood ; and, therefore, unless we are willing to accuse him of dishonesty, we must allow that he did not apply the word to the future state.

But I have another class of reasons to sustain my conclusions.

1. No person, in the New Testament, except our Lord, ever threatened the punishment of *gehenna*. We find nothing of it in the writings of Paul, Peter or John. They do not even warn sinners against it. James uses the word, but not with reference to punishment. Now, why this silence ? Why withhold this great truth, if there be such a place of fire ? Why not dwell upon it as preachers do now ? Let the candid answer.

2. If the word denoted endless misery, why were only the Jews threatened with it ? Why were not the Gentiles asked how they could escape the damnation of hell ? Paul's ministry was chiefly confined to this class ; and yet he says

\* These facts are gathered from the writings of Rev. H. Ballou, 2d.

nothing of (*gehenna*) hell! Shall we say the apostles shrunk from declaring the whole truth? Shall we accuse them of being unfaithful? Why, according to the popular opinion, the doctrine we oppose is the chief means by which to convert sinners, and yet the Gentiles heard nothing of it!!

3. In all the passages where our Lord threatened the punishment of hell, (*gehenna*), except in one instance, he addressed himself to his disciples. Why was this? Why not urge this punishment chiefly upon the attention of sinners? How unlike his course is that of the terrific preachers of the present day!

These facts are unanswerable. They show, beyond all question, that (*gehenna*) hell did not mean, in the days of the apostles, a place of endless suffering. If it did, all the apostles would have preached it. They would have preached it to Gentiles as well as Jews; and chiefly to sinners rather than saints.

The truth is, this word retained its primitive signification, and was used by the Savior to describe the calamities to come upon the Jews at the end of their dispensation. Here is the reason why the Gentiles were not threatened with this punishment. It was not an evil to which they were in any manner exposed; and hence nothing was said to them respecting it. If, therefore, any ever speak to you of (*gehenna*) hell, tell them that no word was used by Jesus or the apostles to denote a place of endless misery. Hell (*gehenna*) has acquired its present signification since their day.

These remarks upon the words everlasting,

*eternal*, *ever* and *hell*, are sufficient to show the importance of going back to the primitive use of terms. We have found, by our examination, that the terms on which our opposers rely to prove the eternity of suffering, were not used by the authors of the Bible in any such manner. The authors of this book used the words just as Universalists do. With these facts before us, how easy it would be to take up all the texts in which these words occur, and show that they are misapplied when employed to prove endless suffering. But I have no time for this labor. Besides, it appears wholly unnecessary; for in the texts which read—"These shall go away into everlasting punishment," and "How can you escape the damnation of hell," the proof of endless woe is thought to be in the words *everlasting* and *hell*; and, consequently, if those words were never used by Jesus in their present popular signification, the texts afford no proof against the salvation of all men.

There is another method by which we can show that the Scriptures give no proof of the eternity of suffering; and to this I will ask your attention for a few moments.

### III. THE PENALTY OF GOD'S LAW IS NOT ENDLESS MISERY.

In deciding what the penalty of God's law is, we must look at those portions of his statute book where his law is published, and its penalties are stated.

1. A law was given to Adam, and a penalty annexed. Now as Adam was the first man, and as to him God first revealed his law, it is natural to suppose that, if the penalty was endless misery, *it would have been distinctly stated to him, in*

order that he and his posterity might know the consequence of transgression. But what was the penalty made known to Adam? *In the day thou eatest of the fruit thereof thou shalt surely die.* Here is the penalty. IN THE DAY. Hence the penalty of the law is not endless misery in the future world; because it was *immediately* to follow transgression, whereas Adam lived many hundred years after this. Neither is the penalty of the law temporal death; for, in that case, God did not execute his threatening. It is, therefore, moral death, such as Adam suffered on the day he transgressed. We are told he was guilty, and hid himself from the Divine presence. This guilt is death. The sinner is morally dead. Moral death, then, was the only one which Adam experienced on the *day* he offended.

2. Cain was a great sinner. Without the least provocation, he slew his brother. What was the punishment denounced upon him? Turn to God's statute book, and you have the answer—“And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel, thy brother? and he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.” Here is the penalty. Does it afford any proof that Cain was doomed to endless woe? Does it favor the common opinion respecting the penalty of God's law? Not the least. *A vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.*



3. When God was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, he said, "Shall I hide from my servant Abraham the thing which I do?" No; he would make him fully acquainted with the judgment he was preparing to inflict. But where did he inform Abraham that he would send those guilty people to endless suffering? Look at what he says: "And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."—Gen. xviii. 22—26. *Destroy the righteous with the wicked—destroy the city.* Does this favor the idea of endless suffering in the future state?

4. The penalty of God's law is thus stated by Moses: "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed

shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed. The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them; and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. And thy carcass shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away."—Deut. xxviii. 15—26. Here is an enumeration of curses, but where is the curse of endless wo? It is not here! No man would ever adduce these curses as any evidence against Universalism. But why was nothing said of the great curse of all curses? Why was it not said God intended to punish these offenders with endless wo? Would it be right and good to withhold a knowledge of such a curse, when it was laid up in store for them?

These are important facts, and they lead irresistibly to the conclusion, that the Bible does not contain the penalty which we are considering. And so far as the Old Testament is concerned, this is the opinion of many learned orthodox writers. Thus, Bishop Warburton says: "Both rewards and punishments promised by Heaven were temporal only." Dr. Paley says: "This dispensation dealt altogether in temporal rewards and punishments." The same opinion was entertained by Grotius, Episcopus, Dr. Campbell, Bishop Burnett, Dr. Burnett, Dr. Hey, and Mr. Ludliem.

That we are right, then, seems perfectly evident. I wish now to ask, whether God could justly inflict a curse never threatened. Let us hear President Fiske in regard to this point. He says, "The curse cannot be more than is threatened, for more would charge upon God the injustice of inflicting sufferings upon his children beyond what his law requires." Hence, all who lived under the old dispensation are sure of salvation, for God is not so unjust as to inflict a punishment never threatened.

Do I hear an objector say, "The New Testament contains the penalty in question?" I reply, before admitting that, it may be well to ask, why a penalty, so essential, should never have been revealed before? Why was it withheld for four thousand years? Did God first attempt the plan of limited punishment, and find it necessary to change that for endless punishment? If not, what has caused the alteration? We should be truly glad to have an answer to these queries. Those who attempt an answer are requested to bear in mind the *following facts*:

1. Christ is said to have brought life and immortality to light; but never said to have brought a state of endless wo to light.

2. He is said to be the Savior of the world, the Savior of the lost; but never the destroyer of any portion of mankind.

3. His dispensation is said to be better than the old, and the covenant he established to have better promises than the Jewish. But how could this be, if he taught the eternity of suffering, while the prophets taught only a limited punishment? Is endless misery better than limited misery?

4. When the Savior was born, the angel who announced it declared that it was a joyful event for all people. But why describe it thus? Why not call it sorrowful, if he was to publish the awful doctrine of endless torture? Surely, if he was the first messenger from God who proclaimed the eternity of suffering, we should think it would have been more suitable to say, *Behold, I bring you bad news of great misery, which shall be to a vast proportion of the world!*

5. Why is it said that *grace* came by Jesus Christ, if he was the first to preach the doctrine of endless wo, on divine authority? Would it not be more just to say wrath and torture came by Jesus Christ?

I have no time for farther queries of this character, and will proceed to consider,

#### IV. THE SILENCE OF THE BIBLE WITH REGARD TO A PLACE OF ENDLESS MISERY.

Having shown that the words rendered hell do not signify a place of ceaseless suffering, I wish to call your attention to the fact, that no allusions are made, in any part of the Bible, which warrant

us in concluding that there is such a place. The allusions to a state of blessedness are very frequent. Thus we read—"In the resurrection we shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but be as the angels of God." There, too, we shall be children of God, being children of the resurrection. That this is a description of our state in the resurrection, is unquestionable; and we learn from it the happy condition of the soul there. St. Paul describes it in the same manner. He says, we shall be incorruptible, immortal, glorious, and blessed. He represents the kingdom of God as a state of perfect purity and joy. And the Savior, when taking a farewell leave of his disciples, said—"In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you."

From these references we have a distinct idea of heaven or the resurrection state. It is a place of immortal life, of uninterrupted joy, of perfect purity, and of endless blessedness.

"There sickness never comes;  
There grief no more complains;  
Health triumphs in immortal bloom,  
And purest pleasure reigns.

No strife nor envy there  
The sons of peace molest,  
But harmony and love sincere  
Fill every happy breast.

No cloud those regions know,  
Forever bright and fair;  
For sin, the source of mortal woe,  
Can never enter there."

While such are the distinct views given of heaven, we find no language descriptive of a state

of endless suffering. We never read that such a place was created or prepared, and in no instance is it said, when sinners die, they go there. We are told of Ahitophel, who hung himself, and of Saul, who slew himself; but nothing is said of their going to endless perdition. We have accounts of the grief of mourners, and of parents weeping over the death of profligate children; but no allusion is made to any hopeless sorrow. Now, why is this, if the inspired writers believed in a place of endless torture? Look at those who now believe it. They can tell you all about it, they know its dimensions, and can give you a better geographical description of it than of the state in which they live. They know who has gone there, and who is going, and will even doom to it those whom they never saw, and of whose Christian character they are entirely ignorant. We demand the scriptural authority for this. We demand a single passage which says any man, after death, was doomed to endless wo.

Am I pointed to the rich man in hell? I reply, the learned, as I have already shown, admit that the hell in which he was suffering was not a place of endless misery. Dr. Allen, of Bangor, admits this; Professor Stuart of Andover admits this; Dr. Campbell admits it. The word, therefore, is no proof that when a wicked man dies he is doomed to a state of endless misery.

The doctrine we oppose teaches that for the sins of this life some will be sent, at death, to such a state of torture. But in the account of the rich man there is nothing like this. Admit that the account is a literal history, and it only proves a limited future punishment; for if the hell was

limited where he was suffering, it could not certainly teach anything more than a limited punishment.

But we deny that the account is a literal history; we maintain that it is a parable; and that the story of the rich man was introduced, not for the purpose of recognising its truth, but to illustrate the national death of the Jews, and the evils they were bringing upon themselves.

In ascertaining the meaning of the parable, we have no more to do with the story on which it is founded, than we have with the story about a conversation between the trees, the vine and the bramble, in the parable of Jotham.—(Judges ix. 7—16.) The truth conveyed is in the thing signified, and not in the figure or story chosen as an illustration. It matters not, therefore, if the Jews had a story among them about a rich man that died and went to hell, and that Jesus chose it as the foundation of a parable. By founding a parable upon it, he did not declare the story true; he merely employed it to illustrate and enforce truth. I say, therefore, again, we have no instance where any are said to have gone to endless woe; and that the Bible is entirely silent in regard to such a place. I do not say that the Bible teaches a perfect equality at death; but I say that it reveals no place where a portion are to be tortured without end. Indeed, it is explicit in saying, “all go to one place;” that “the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it.” Not only does the Bible teach that all go to one place, but that, in the resurrection, all shall be in the kingdom of God, and rejoice together in the possession of endless life.

We have many other considerations on which we should be glad to dwell at length; but our limits forbid, and we must be content with a brief allusion to the most important of them. They may all be classed under the following head, viz.

V. THE STRONGEST TERMS EMPLOYED TO EXPRESS THE EVIL OF SIN ARE APPLIED TO SUFFERINGS WHICH WE KNOW WERE LIMITED.

1. *Unquenchable fire.* This term is thus used by Jeremiah—"But if you will not hearken unto me, \* \* \* then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."—(Jer. xvii. 27.) Here we have the phrase—*not be quenched*. But the fire to which it refers ceased to burn when the temple at Jerusalem was consumed. The term, therefore, does not imply endless burning.

2. *Worm dieth not.* Isaiah thus uses this expression—"And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."—(lxvi. 24.) Here the prophet alludes to the worms which preyed upon the dead carcasses, that were left unburied in the valley of Hinnom, when Jerusalem was destroyed. Those worms were no more than any of our own day; and were said to die not, because worms were always preying there. The expression, therefore, does not denote endless suffering.

3. *Destruction.* God says—I will sweep Babylon with the besom of destruction.—(xiv. 23.) This refers to the overthrow of that city; so that destruction gives no evidence of endless woe. Men are said to be destroyed when their integrity



is gone, or their habits become bad. The word is often applied to temporal evils. (See Esth. viii. 6; ix. 5; Job v. 22; xxi. 27; Ps. xxxv. 8; Prov. xvi. 18.)

4. *Utterly destroyed.* "They utterly destroyed the Canaanites."—(Numb. xxi. 23.) "We utterly destroyed Sihon and his people."—(Deut. ii. 34.) "We utterly destroyed the cities of Og."—(Deut. iii. 6.) These cases show that the expression simply signifies being reduced to a state of extreme dependence and wretchedness, or being cut off from the earth.

5. *Fierceness of his anger, wrath and indignation.* These strong terms were employed by David to represent the temporal evils which God sent upon Egypt. (Ps. lxxviii. 49.) Paul, speaking of those Jews who would not allow the Gospel to be carried to the Gentiles, said, wrath is *come* upon them to the *uttermost*; not shall, but *is* come to the uttermost. (1 Thess. ii. 16.)

6. *Cursed.* Joshua said, "Now, therefore, are ye cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondsmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water."—(ix. 23.) Thus, cursed is used to signify a state of degrading servitude and great suffering, but not endless wo.

7. *Lost.* This represents the condition of all sinners. They are lost to usefulness and happiness; but they are not irrecoverably lost, for Jesus came to seek and save them, and the Bible says, "This my son was lost and is found."

The foregoing expressions, which are relied upon to prove the eternity of suffering, are among the strongest which the Bible contains; and yet, they are all used with reference to limited evils.

This is a fact which cannot be disputed ; and it proves, beyond all question, that in these expressions there is no evidence of endless torture.

What, then, if the Bible speaks of *unquenchable fire, of a worm which dieth not, of destruction, of being utterly destroyed, of a fierce anger, of the curse of sinners, and of their being lost* ; unless it can be shown that these expressions denote a suffering which never ends, they are no proof against us. But how can that be proved, when we find them used to denote sufferings which we know are limited ?

I have one topic more which I wish to introduce, and that is,

VI. THE KIND OF EVIDENCE NECESSARY TO PROVE  
ENDLESS SUFFERING.

Blackstone, in treating of the nature of crimes and their punishment, presents six considerations which claim attention. 1. The general nature of crimes and punishments. 2. The persons capable of committing crimes. 3. The several degrees of guilt as principals or accessories. 4. The several species of crimes, with the punishment annexed to each. 5. The means of preventing their perpetration. 6. The method of inflicting those punishments which the law has annexed to each several crime and misdemeanor.

Here you see what this distinguished man deemed requisite in regard to human laws. But if such distinct views on each of these points are requisite, how much more necessary are distinct views in regard to sin against God, and the punishment which it deserves. We ought, at least, to know,

1. What the punishment of sin is. This should be expressed in terms which admit of no dispute. Such terms might be found. We have no doubt about the meaning of the language employed by the present advocates of endless misery. God, then, could have expressed himself equally as plain and strong. That he has not, is a fact which is undisputed. He has nowhere said when a man dies his spirit goes to a place of endless torture.

2. We do not know in what endless punishment is to consist. Is it to be a literal fire? Is it horror of conscience? Is it banishment from God? Is it confinement in a prison? Is it being in a place where we shall be alternately exposed to the extremes of heat and cold? Some say one thing, some another. In what consists the punishment of those who transgress the laws of our land? Go to the statute book, and there you have the answer. But would not God be as plain as earthly lawgivers are?

3. We do not know who are capable of committing crimes which expose to endless misery. Are children? Are idiots? Are the heathen? Some say, yes—some, no. But human laws define who are capable of violating them.

4. We do not know what degree of sin will subject us to endless misery. There are none without sin—none without some unbelief, some unreconciliation. How much of this is requisite to justify God in cutting us off? Now I ask, if we can believe that matters, involving infinite consequences, are thus loosely and indefinitely stated? The idea charges injustice upon

God, and makes him cruel and unmerciful. The only evidence which should be admitted in a case like this, is that of the most positive and distinct character, and which defines particularly the punishment, its nature, its degree, its duration, the causes for which inflicted, and on whom it will be inflicted.

But we have no such evidence. You see this in the fact that there is no agreement in regard to these points. Some entertain one view, and some another. The views are vastly more various than the opposing Christian sects.

Thus, when weighed in the balances of candid investigation, the doctrine of endless misery is seen to be without any support from the Bible.

## SERMON VI.

### THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE IN DEFENCE OF UNIVERSALISM.

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Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.—Rom. v. 18, 19.

THE inspired writers use a great variety of figures to represent the nature and extent of the salvation which God has prepared for his children. But no figure is perhaps more expressive than that of *life*. This embraces in itself almost every other blessing; and immediately suggests to the mind the idea of society, holiness, and exemption from every possible evil. Here *life* is taken from us by pain, sickness, and calamity; by toil and the wasting powers of time; but when redeemed, and admitted to the glories of heaven, we shall be freed from all these evils. Here our *life* is rendered miserable by ignorance, error, and

sin ; by the contention and strife and bitterness of society ; by the blighting and withering influence of unholy passions, blinding prejudices, and opposing interests ; but when made heirs of glory, we shall be free from all evil, and exalted to endless blessedness.

In this view of the final condition of the redeemed, all are perfectly agreed. They look upon it as a state of unspeakable and unalterable felicity ; as the perfection of all the soul can desire. But while all are agreed in regard to this state, there is a wide difference of opinion respecting the number who will reach it. To a discussion of this subject, I shall ask your attention in this discourse. And I begin by observing,

**I. THAT SALVATION IS THE FREE GIFT OF GOD.**

This is an important position, and if fully sustained, there will be no difficulty in agreeing upon the extent of salvation.

In the common affairs of life, gift means something which is gratuitously bestowed, which is distinct from wages. That in the Scriptures it is used in the same sense, there can be no doubt ; for *gift* can have no other meaning. Therefore, when the Bible says salvation is *given*, its language is capable of only one construction.

There are three kinds of arguments, which may be adduced to prove that salvation is a gift. **1. Presumptive arguments. 2. Indirect Scripture arguments. 3. Direct Scripture arguments.** By these three methods we will prove our position.

**1. Presumptive arguments.** We have time to adduce but two of these. One is founded on the immense disproportion between human merit and

salvation. Merit and reward bear to each other the relation of equivalents; and when a man is said to receive anything as a *reward*, we always suppose he has performed some act to merit it.

This being the case, salvation cannot be given as a reward for human virtue, because there is no relation between the two. Salvation is an infinite good; it is glory and immortality and perfect joy. But human merit—what is it? Alas! At the best, it is an imperfect good, standing no more in the relation of an equivalent to salvation, than man stands in the relation of an equal to God. What a disproportion! Human merit! Why, all our acts are imperfect—even our best acts are a mixture of selfishness and goodness. Besides, what a long list of high-handed and dark sins are set over against our virtues; so that our merit is almost less than nothing. Merit! Who merits all the temporal blessings he enjoys; all the advantages of sunshine and rain, light and heat; all the riches and beauties of earth; all the sweets and charms of existence? Almost everything we here enjoy is a gift; so that we should be debtors, poor debtors, were we to reckon even with respect to the things of *this world*! How erroneous, then, to suppose we can merit heaven!

The second presumptive argument is drawn from the fact that virtue is its own reward. If there be any one doctrine taught in holy writ, it is this—"Great peace have they who love the law of God." Now if virtue is its own reward—if the peace which it brings to the soul, the influence which it exerts, and the sacred emotions that it awakens in the heart, are its own reward, why should we expect another? Why hope to be *doubly paid*?

But people reason, on this subject, as though virtue is a very irksome and troublesome matter. And we have no doubt it appears such to them; for they suppose it consists in looking and feeling sad, in renouncing everything calculated to afford present happiness. Now we all know, that it is a hard matter to keep the face in a disfigured aspect; to live constantly in reflections upon eternal wo, and to shut ourselves out from all the innocent enjoyments of life. But such are mistaken respecting virtue. This is not virtue, but superstition. Virtue consists in love to God and each other; in doing as we would be done by; in dealing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly.

It is this mistake about virtue that has given such currency to the idea of an endless reward—that has caused almost all Christians to assume it as a fact that human virtue is not its own reward. Hence they employ this as one of their principal arguments for the necessity of endless suffering. They seem to suppose that the great discovery made by the Gospel is endless rewards and punishments. Thus they make hell an appendage to this world; a “kind of make-weight thrown in by Jehovah to keep the scales of justice hanging even.” It would have been well if the Christian world had taken the opinion of heathen philosophers here; for they taught that virtue is its *own* reward; a fact which all know, who are not bewildered by theological error, or involved in theological mysticism.

Such are some of the presumptive arguments which show that salvation is freely given.

Let us consider,



2. Some indirect Scripture arguments in proof of this great doctrine. The Bible is positive on the subject of God's constant benefactions: it represents him as daily and hourly bestowing his riches and bounties in a gratuitous manner. Look, for instance, at its language respecting temporal gifts. Thus we read, "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." "Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." "He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." The meaning of this language cannot be mistaken. We know how these temporal bounties are bestowed; they are the free gifts of God.

Again. In God's dealings with the Jews we see the same course pursued. It was not for their virtue that he gave them a revelation of himself; that he spake to them from Sinai; that he sent them prophet after prophet; that he was a wonder-working God in their behalf; that he redeemed them from bondage, and led them by a special providence from Egypt to Canaan. Israel had no merit that induced this exertion of divine power. All was done on the principle of grace—to carry forward the great purposes of God's government in elevating, improving, and blessing the race of man.

Again. In God's dealings with the Gentiles we have another proof of free gifts. When the *Gospel* was given them; when the inspired her-

alds of the cross were sent to them with their message of salvation; when they were called into the kingdom by the special light of inspiration and the irresistible power of repeated miracles, they were, like the Jews, destitute of merit. Indeed, they were not only without merit, but they were sunk into every low and debasing vice. They were, says Paul, "aliens from God." How, then, except by a gift, a free gift, could such a people ever have been lifted, from their degradation and sin, to the high and holy eminence of Gospel light and virtue?

What proofs are here of God's disposition to bestow unmerited favors! But suppose such is not his disposition—suppose he acts on the principle of giving his religion only to those who deserve it; on whom would its holy light shine, or for whom would its power be exerted? Virtue and holiness and knowledge are the effect of the Gospel, just as the growth of grain is the effect of sunshine and rain. Therefore, if the Gospel be not a blessing which is given gratuitously, none can obtain it, any more than they can obtain produce from the earth without the gift of sunshine and rain.

Here, then, we see that bestowing things gratuitously is God's uniform method of procedure. This is the great principle on which his government is conducted. He is truly, therefore, the Giver of every good and perfect gift. From him all good comes—he is the originator of all light, knowledge, and virtue. His blessings are constantly flowing out in full and unfailing streams to all his dependent children. He waits not for man, any more than the fountain waits for the

stream, or the sun waits for the earth. God is the fountain, and he has opened countless channels by which his mercies are conveyed to man. He is the sun, and his light is constantly imparted, whether we open our eyes to behold it or not.

Now as God thus acts upon the principle of bestowing things gratuitously, does not analogy show that salvation is freely bestowed? If there is a necessity for thus giving temporal and spiritual favors, there is an infinitely greater necessity for giving salvation; for if we can do nothing towards meriting temporal gifts, what can we do towards meriting heaven? Besides, why should not the disposition which gives the former, give the latter also? The former are the effect of goodness—a goodness which is infinite, and which always adapts its gifts, its plans, its dealings, to the wants, circumstances and interests of mankind. Therefore, salvation must be a free gift.

But leaving these indirect Scripture arguments, let us consider,

3. Those of a direct character. According to the Scriptures, there are no conditions which involve any uncertainty in the bestowment of salvation, or which suspend it on human agency. The Bible does not say, unless we give our hearts to God here, we shall be doomed to endless perdition hereafter. It simply says, no man can be happy till he is converted; and, therefore, it gives no countenance to the idea that our endless weal is suspended upon present obedience.

This we know is entirely different from the common doctrine of conditions. According to that, if we here do certain prescribed works, we shall have endless life; but if we neglect these

works, we shall be doomed to endless death. Now the error of this is seen in the fact, that it destroys the idea of a gift—it makes salvation not the *gift*, but the *offer* of God. That which is offered may and may not be ours; but that which is given is ours. Thus there is an infinite difference between a gift and an offer. Not only so. Conditions, involving our endless weal, are supposed to give us a claim upon Deity, to bring him under an obligation to bestow salvation, and to constrain him to do what he otherwise would not do. But this is altogether a mistake. God needs no constraining. He wills that we should be saved—he purposes that we should be—he has prepared and laid up salvation in reserve for us. And yet, we talk of constraining him to give it! How unreasonable!

What are termed conditions, involve an uncertainty respecting salvation. Now why should God thus render this infinite blessing uncertain? Why needlessly place in jeopardy the endless interests of his offspring? Could mercy, goodness, or justice dictate such a course? No, my hearers; no more than they could direct a mother needlessly to expose her infant to death. Salvation, then, is not offered, but given; it is not suspended on conditions, but secured in the Divine counsel. Nothing we can do will give any claim on God, or constrain him to any act in our behalf. He needs no such constraint; for it was his first design, his design begun in the morning of existence, to render his offspring happy; and all the plans he has formed are intended to render the creature subservient to the Creator—they are a series of wisely adjusted and powerfully executed

means, by which he accomplishes his first, his chief purpose, by which he elevates man to a dignity that from everlasting he designed him to possess. Surely, then, salvation is free.

Again ; salvation was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Thus we read : " Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began ; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."—(2 Tim. i. 9, 10.)

I could fill a volume on these words, and not exhaust the matter they contain. First : they teach that salvation is not according to works. Now a more direct and express contradiction of the leading doctrines of the day, could not be given. Salvation by works is the constant theme. Why are we taught that only a few will be saved ? Because only a few have works. Why are we told that millions will perish in hell ? Because their works are bad. Works, then, in the eyes of most Christians, are the ascension chariot, by which we rise to glory. And yet the Bible says, *not according to works*.

The second point in these words is, that we are saved by the purpose and grace of God. That it is the Divine purpose to save all, we have distinctly proved ; and we know but few, at the present day, who deny that such is God's purpose. The character of the purpose is also taught in the text just quoted. Men purpose to do things on certain conditions ; as, for instance, to start on a

journey at a given time, if health and circumstances permit. But as all events depend on God, his purposes cannot be thus conditional. Therefore it is said—*which he hath purposed in himself*. Everything is with God, rests with him—is dependent upon him, and is known by him. Hence, his purpose cannot be conditional. Besides, as he knows all things future, to form a conditional purpose, would be to purpose what he knows would never take place, or purposing a thing in a way in which he knows it cannot be accomplished. Now man, in all his folly, never acts thus. Consequently, God's purpose must be unconditional—it is in himself. Such, then, is the purpose by which we are saved.

The grace accords with the purpose. Grace is favor. Impartial grace, therefore, is impartial favor; and infinite grace is infinite favor. Consider the extent and greatness of grace? Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man. Here is impartial grace. The grace of God bringing salvation to all men. Here is infinite grace. Consequently, if salvation is bestowed according to this, it must be given to all.

The third point is, that this purpose and grace were given us before the world began. This throws entirely out of the question the idea that God was influenced, in the gift of eternal life, by human virtue. We could have done no virtuous act, because we had no being. He was guided, therefore, in the gift, solely by his own will and nature, by his own grace and goodness. It is admitted, that, were it not for sin, God would save all mankind. But here we see that prior to the existence of sin, the plan of salvation was formed;

and, therefore, it must redeem all. Let none say, sin will cause him to revoke his decrees, recall his gift; because the purpose and grace were given with a perfect knowledge of all the sin that would ever exist.

These three positions are confirmed by the office ascribed to the Savior. He does not by his labor and sufferings induce God to form the purpose. Neither does he change Deity from wrath to grace; but he manifests a purpose already formed, and a grace already in existence. *Given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but are now made manifest.* To manifest an object is not to create it, but to unfold it to the mind, so that it shall be seen and understood.

This Divine purpose and grace not only existed, but the inheritance he had prepared for man also existed. Hence it is said, "*but is now made manifest by the appearing of him who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light.*" Life and immortality have a fixed existence—they are what God has prepared for us. But of this we were ignorant till revealed by the Gospel, just as the blind are ignorant of the beauties and glories of nature. Remove this veil of blindness, and you bring to light these glories and beauties—not create them; they exist before the blind see, the same as after. So with life and immortality. They existed before Jesus brought them to light—before he removed the curtain from futurity—the same as now. Hence, eternal life is indeed a free gift. This will be further evident by considering the following language of St. John: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God,

hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life : and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."—1 John v. 10, 11, 12. A record presupposes the conveyance of something from one to another. Thus, a man sells his land, and gives a deed of the same, certifying thereto. So a father conveys, by will, his property to his children, and the record certifies to this conveyance. Without the conveyance, the record is useless—significant of nothing. The text quoted asserts that God has given us a record ; and shall we say it is a record of nothing—that he has given nothing? God, surely, would not thus sport with man ; therefore, salvation must be given. Hence the text says, "And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life." This life is God's bequest to man—what his grace has bestowed. It is called an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance, which is reserved in heaven for us.

In the manner of bestowing this gift, God has displayed infinite wisdom and goodness. Though he has given it, and secured it to us, he has so given it that we cannot squander and waste it away. The interest, if I may so speak, we can draw, and use as our own wisdom and desires may dictate. This is just as far as human agency extends : over the capital we have no power. How wise and benevolent is this arrangement ! We are so much the creatures of passion, that we should readily barter away worlds of infinite riches, had we them at our command. How do we abuse the agency we have ! How do we waste



our time in sin, and devote our powers to folly ! How do we squander the treasures of earth, and throw away our talents, happiness, and privileges ! We are like the prodigal, who wasted his substance in sin. Had the father given him the best robe and the golden ring, these would have gone also. Therefore, he retained them in his own hand. So our heavenly Father : he has secured to us salvation ; he has so reserved it for us that we cannot barter it away, or be cheated out of it by the deceptions of the world and the devil. Hence it is said, the unbelief of man cannot make the faith of God without effect. Thus we see salvation is given freely and wisely.

This reasoning accords with the general language of Scripture. "The gift of God is eternal life."—(Rom. vi. 23.) "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead ; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift : for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one ; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."—(Rom. v. 15—17.) "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior *Jesus Christ* ; who gave himself for us, that he

might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”—(Titus ii. 11—14.) “But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”—(Titus iii. 4—7.) “And if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.”—(Rom. xi. 6.) “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”—(2 Cor. viii. 9.) See, also, Eph. ii. 2—8; iii. 8.

Thus, salvation is a gift. It is a free gift, like the sunshine and rain, and bestowed without reference to works. It is not suspended on conditions which make the possession of it uncertain. The gospel, it is true, has conditions, but they relate not to the eternal weal of man; this is made secure in the counsel of Jehovah; it is fixed by his unchanging decree. “I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”—(Ps. ii. 7, 8.) “God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath

in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things."—(Heb. i. 1, 2.)

But while we believe that such are the decree and the appointment of God; that the termination of his moral government is immutably fixed; that all the vices and corruption, the darkness and clouds which oppose it, cannot prevent the intended result, we believe also that the end is gained without doing any violence to human agency. The Bible gives numerous instances in which God's unalterable purposes have been thus accomplished. The deliverance of the Jews from Egypt; their restoration from Babylon to Canaan; the crucifixion of Jesus Christ; the destruction of the Jewish nation and the overthrow of their temple and city, are events which God purposed and foretold; and yet they were all accomplished in connection with the agency of the creature. Human agency did not render the accomplishment of the divine purposes and predictions uncertain; neither did these purposes and predictions destroy human agency. I do not pretend that I can show how God can thus carry on his work, and do all his pleasure; but that he does, is unquestionable; for his wisdom and power are infinite and his government perfect. Hence we read—"All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the governor among the nations."—(Ps. xxii. 27, 28.)

Let none seek to avoid this conclusion, by saying, according to this doctrine God will force men to heaven; for if such an inference is right, he

forced the Jews from Egyptian bondage; he forced them from their Babylonish captivity; he forced Judas to betray Christ, and the Jews to crucify him; for we maintain that God by the operations of free grace will work out the salvation of all men, just as he accomplished his purposes in the instances we have named. In those instances there was no arbitrary control over the creature. He acted voluntarily; he did his own pleasure; and yet God fulfilled all his designs. While, therefore, we say God will accomplish his purposes and fulfil all his promises, we say, also, man has an agency in his salvation, the same as Judas had in delivering Jesus into the hands of his murderers, and the Jews in murdering him. We say that no man will enjoy God till he believes his word, and loves him with all the heart. This is the condition of salvation; and to this extent we hold that salvation is conditional. Just as long as man continues in sin, so long he will continue in misery. The only way to become a child of grace is to become good, and give our hearts to the Lord. Our happiness will always be in proportion to our goodness and advancement in knowledge.

God, then, will accomplish all his purposes, for he has given no power to the creature which can prevent their execution. Man's agency is limited, but God's is unlimited. God, therefore, is constantly carrying forward his plans; and what may appear to us like interruptions and defeats, may be among the very means by which his most gracious purposes will be fulfilled. In how many instances has he made good grow out of evil, light shine forth from darkness, and prosperity result

from adversity! The reason is, he is a God of grace, and in all things he is seeking our good. The gracious purpose he formed in the hour when man was created, he pursues amid all the vices and corruptions of a fallen world; and bestows blessings, not according to our merit, but according to his abundant mercy. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."—(1 Peter i. 3, 4.)

The circumstance, then, that there is sin in the world, is no argument against the salvation of man; for the plan of grace was designed to save from sin. Had there been no sin, there would have been no need of a Savior; for "the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." All, therefore, who urge sin as an argument against the salvation of the world, overlook the object for which the plan was formed. Let it not be said, the remedy is inadequate to effect a cure; for this is impeaching the wisdom and goodness of God. What physician would fail to remove the disease of his patient, if he had the means requisite? And is man better than God?

Again. The circumstance that some men are peculiarly abandoned and unworthy is no argument against their salvation; for many of the saints now in the kingdom of grace were once poor, blind, depraved, and degraded. God, in his scheme of mercy, reached down the hand of compassion, and lifted them from their miserable condition, to

the high and holy privileges which they now enjoy. He caused the light of truth to irradiate their darkened minds; he made the waters of grace cleanse their polluted souls, and he warmed their cold hearts by an exhibition of his infinite and everlasting love. He saved them by his grace; he did for them according to the riches of his goodness.

Again. The fact that some die without faith and hope, is no proof against their salvation. God has nowhere declared that the day of grace is confined to this world; that we come here to form characters for eternity; that as we die so we shall endlessly remain. Were this his arrangement, all the heathen must be doomed to hell; for they have no Christian faith or hope. Idiots and infants also must share the same dreadful fate; for they die in ignorance. What a terrible thought is this! What a character does it give to the great God of heaven! It makes him cruel, partial, and unjust! It makes him doom people to endless perdition for unavoidable ignorance! Besides, why should grace flow out to man in this state, and not in the future? Is God changeable? Is not his mercy everlasting? Is it not the nature of mercy and grace to help those who are unable to help themselves? Who, then, could be a more suitable object of grace, than one who dies without God and hope?

We maintain, therefore, that those who die in sin will be saved by grace, just as sinners are here saved. God can show mercy in one state of being as well as in another. The same grace which can here redeem the defiled and besotted, can redeem those who die in this condition. &

will be of no avail to say, the latter have no merit ; for they have the same merit which Saul of Tarsus had, which Simon the leper had, which the thief upon the cross had. I know it is thought there is a great difficulty here—one which we cannot surmount. I am frank to say, to my mind there is no difficulty whatever. Were merit essential to salvation, there would be difficulty ; but since salvation is of grace ; since without grace there is salvation for no human being, there is no more difficulty in proving the salvation of all men than of one man ; for the same principle which works out the salvation of one, can work out the salvation of all. The objection we are considering goes against salvation by grace, rather than against the salvation of all ; and those who urge it, to be consistent, should boldly say, salvation is of works, not of grace ; and the redeemed should sing praises to good works, and not to him who gave himself a ransom for all men. Accordingly, the Revelator was wrong when he declared, the glorified will sing praises to God and the Lamb for redemption ; for they redeem not ; man is his own savior, and should sing his own praises.

II. We might here rest our argument, were it not for the strength of prejudice, and the influence of education. These chain down the mind, and prevent its beholding the light of truth, unless it shines with all the splendor of the noon-day sun. Hence, we are obliged to pile proof on proof, and demonstrate the correctness of our doctrine, before any will own that it is from God. I will, therefore, proceed by observing,

1. That the free gift will come upon all men unto justification of life. Thus our text says, "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." The salvation of all is here asserted in the most positive manner. The free gift is as extensive as the condemnation; and as all were condemned, the free gift will come upon all. The free gift does not, as many suppose, simply place man in a salvable state, or redeem him from the curse of the fall; it produces salvation, or, as the apostle expresses it—*justification of life*. Hence, he says, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Observe the terms set over against each other: *Many (all men) were made sinners; many (all men) were made righteous. Judgment came upon all men unto condemnation; the free gift came upon all men unto justification.* Observe, also, the terms used to express the result. *Justification of life—made righteous.* This is the language by which the apostle describes the effects to be produced by the free gift. Similar language is found in all the epistles. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."—(1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, 26.) "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel



unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”—(Gal. iii. 8.) “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—(Phil. ii. 9—11.) “For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”—(Col. i. 19, 20.)

It is impossible to mistake the meaning of this testimony. It teaches, in the most explicit manner, the final purification of all hearts, the universal triumph of holiness. How truly, then, could the apostle say, “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Hence, with Dr. A. Clarke, we believe, “As extensively, as deeply, as universally, as *sin*—whether implying the *act of transgression*, or the *impure principle* from which the act proceeds, or *both*—*hath reigned*, subjected the whole earth and all its inhabitants; the whole soul, and all its powers and faculties, *unto death, temporal of the body, spiritual of the soul, and eternal of both*; *even so*, as extensively, deeply, and universally, *might grace reign*, filling the whole earth, and pervading, purifying, and refining the whole soul: *through righteousness*, through this doctrine of free salvation, by the blood of the Lamb, and by the principle of *holiness* transfused through the soul by the Holy Ghost; *unto eternal life*, the proper object of an immortal spirit’s hope,

the only sphere where the human intellect can rest, and be happy in the *place* and *state* where God is; where he is seen *AS HE IS*; and where he can be enjoyed without interruption in an eternal progression of knowledge and beatitude; *by Jesus Christ our Lord*, as the *cause* of our salvation, the *means* by which it is communicated, and the *source* whence it springs. Thus we find that the salvation from sin here is as extensive and complete as the *guilt* and *contamination* of sin: death is conquered, hell disappointed, the devil confounded, and sin totally destroyed. Here is glorying; *to Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests to God and his Father, be glory and dominion forever and ever, Amen! Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! Amen, and Amen."*

2. The Bible teaches that all shall be taught of God. Thus it is said, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."—(Isaiah xi. 9.) "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations."—(Isaiah xxv. 6, 7.) "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his

brother, saying, know ye the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”—(Heb. viii. 10—12.)

In considering this testimony, two points are worthy of special consideration. First. The universality of the work described. All are to be taught of God—not one nation, or one class; but all nations; all, from the least to the greatest. Second. All thus taught will be holy and obedient; they will dwell together in love; they will be kind and affectionate; the fiercest and most wicked will be amiable and excellent. This accords with the language of the Savior. “These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”—(John xvii. 1—3.) Thus, when all know God, all will be heirs of salvation.

3. The Bible teaches the destruction of all sin. This was one of the objects of the Savior’s mission. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”—(1 John iii. 8.) “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!”—(John i. 29.)

Not only is Christ said to have come that he might destroy sin, but he is represented as being fully successful in this mission. “For unto us a

child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”—(Isaiah ix. 6, 7.) “The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied : by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many ; for he shall bear their iniquities.”—(Isaiah liii. 10, 11.) Paul says, “Now once in the end of the world hath Christ appeared, to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself.”—(Heb. ix. 26.) This shows, as Christ died for all, that his sacrifice will put away the sin of all. Hence St. John says, that “the blood of Christ cleanseth *from all sin!*”—(1 John i. 7.) He also says, that “we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ; and he is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the *whole world.*”—(1 John ii. 1, 2.) No language can be plainer, no proof stronger. All sin, then, will be destroyed ; every heart become pure ; all be saved with the washing of regeneration, and thus become fit temples for the Holy Spirit. “It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel ; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth.”—(Isaiah xlix. 6.)

What a change is here contemplated ! We see a world redeemed and fitted for the glories of heaven ; and sin, the foe of human peace, the waster of human hopes, exterminated from the wide creation, and all the hearts, where its desolations have been witnessed, filled with love and rejoicing. Glory to God in the highest !

4. The Bible teaches the destruction of all death. There are three kinds of death mentioned by the inspired writers, viz., the death of the body, (Gen. xxv. 11;) a moral death, (1 John iii. 4;) and national death, (Eze. xviii. 31, 32.) In this last sense, it is applied to the Jewish nation, and called the *second death*, and used to represent their destruction at the close of their dispensation.

Many, I am aware, suppose that death is employed to denote endless punishment ; but the Bible gives no such intimation—for it does not contain the expression, endless death. You will find this in the writings of all partialists, but not in God's word. Besides, the Bible uniformly declares, that death shall finally be destroyed ; and that the period shall come when death shall be unknown. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave ; I will redeem them from death : O death, I will be thy plagues ; O grave, I will be thy destruction : repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."—(Hosea xiii. 14.) "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."—(1 Cor. xv. 25, 26.) "O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—

(1 Cor. xv. 55—57.) "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."—(Heb. ii. 14, 15.) "And there shall be no more death."—(Rev. xxi. 4.)

Dr. A. Clarke has truly said, "Death cannot be *destroyed* by there being simply no further death; death can only be destroyed and annihilated by a *general resurrection*. If there be no general resurrection, it is most evident that death will still retain his empire. Therefore, the fact that *death shall be destroyed*, assures the fact that there shall be a *general resurrection*: and this is a proof, also, that, after the resurrection, there shall be *no more death*."

Perhaps it will be said, "True, man will be raised above the power of death; he will be rendered immortal; but this is no evidence of happiness; he may be raised to immortal agony." I reply, this would not be the destruction of all death; for millions would remain in moral death, and suffer tortures infinitely more fearful than any which are here endured. Besides, St. Paul teaches the end of moral death. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. xv. 22.) To be in Christ is to be a new creature: old things are passed away, and all things are new. Therefore, in the resurrection "we shall bear the image of the heavenly," we shall be in the kingdom of God: "tears will be wiped from all faces;" and all will be "children

of God, being children of the resurrection ;" all will "be equal unto the angels."

Such is a specimen of the Divine testimony. Does it not fully justify us in saying, God is the Savior of all men ; Christ is the Savior of the world ; the free gift will come upon all men unto justification of life ; the whole creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God ? Does it not also justify us in teaching that God will not contend forever ; that his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting ; that he will have mercy on all ; that pain, sorrow and crying will end, and the ransomed of the Lord will return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads ? How glorious is the prospect of the true believer ! How cheering the hopes by which his soul is blessed ! Though pained to witness the ravages of sin and death ; to behold man fighting against God, and despising the Savior ; though mourning over the waywardness of his own friends, their contempt of religion, and the indescribable woes they bring upon themselves, he can look forward to the time when this moral waste shall be succeeded by the triumph of holiness ; when light shall dawn upon every benighted mind, and a redeemed world rejoice together in the kingdom of immortal glory !

"I see burst asunder the gates of the grave,  
Hell hears, and his mandate submissive obeys,  
There banners of virtue, eternal shall wave,  
Whilst worlds stand enraptured in wonder and praise."

## SERMON VII.

THE FAITH NECESSARY TO CONSTITUTE A CHRISTIAN.

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I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.—Acts viii. 37.

HAVING in the preceding discourses fully established the doctrine of Universal Salvation, I propose, in the remaining three of this series, to consider, first, the *faith necessary to constitute a Christian*; second, *experimental religion*; and third, *the practice of a true Christian*. My object in discussing these subjects is to refute the charge that Universalists cannot be Christians. You are all aware how industriously this has been urged, and of the untiring measures taken to prejudice the Christian community against us. In this discourse, I shall ask your attention to the faith necessary to constitute a Christian. I begin by observing that the inspired writers dwell much upon the necessity of faith. They speak of it as the medium through which we obtain life and salvation, and as the means by which we become united to the Savior. Their language is, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting



life ; he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

In this necessity of faith, all Christians are agreed. I know of no exception among the various sects of the world. Not one can be found which does not urge upon its members its necessity, and does not pronounce those infidels who are without faith.

But though all are thus agreed, there is a wide difference of opinion in regard to the faith required. The various sects have each a system of faith, for which they contend with great zeal, and which they hold up as essential ; and many, in the warmth of their feelings, condemn as infidels all who dissent from their views. All Protestant sects are thus condemned by the Catholics ; and many of the Protestants thus condemn the Catholics. Not only so—the Protestants condemn each other. The Calvinists condemn the Arminians, and the Arminians condemn the Calvinists. The Pedobaptists condemn the Anti-pedobaptists, and the Anti-pedobaptists condemn the Pedobaptists.

It gives me great pleasure to know that the denomination to which I belong never thus condemns any ; it says to no class who acknowledge the Scriptures as a revelation from God, you are infidels. We condemn unchristian conduct, and

set the seal of reprobation upon actions which are wrong; but we say no man is an infidel, because he believes differently from what we do. This is a peculiarity in which I rejoice; a characteristic in which I glory. I would not own myself a Christian, did Christianity foster a spirit so exclusive and illiberal as that which says to all of a different creed—*you are bound to perdition—you are heretics*. If there is anything I abhor, which I loathe from the depths of my soul, it is such illiberality. It is a disgrace to the cause of truth, a curse to society, and an enemy to the peace of the world. I stand ready to extend to any sincere believer in the holy book, the warm hand of Christian fellowship.

But with all others it is not so. Many, very many, are ready to denounce as infidels all who do not adopt their creed. We are daily classed with infidels, and told that we have no right to the Christian name. This is the *constant* talk of some preachers. They give utterance to it in public and private; in the labored review and the weekly journal; they preach it, and pray it, and sing it; they instil it into their children, and spread it on the wings of every wind. *Universalists are not Christians—Universalists are infidels*. Hardly any assertions are more frequent than these—hardly any are made with so much assurance—hardly any are so industriously circulated.

But why are we thus assailed? Do we not believe the Bible? Our views of the authority and authenticity of this book are the same as those entertained by other Christians. We receive it as the word of God, as his revealed will,

as our authoritative guide in all the concerns of faith and practice. We bow before it with the most profound reverence ; we read it in our public and private devotions ; and with us its decisions are final. We also believe in Christ as the promised Messiah, as the Son of God, and the Savior of the world. We believe in the necessity of religion, its power to give peace, to guide in the way of duty, and to inspire with hope in the hour of death. Why, then, are we infidels ? Why does our faith disqualify us to be Christians ? Do infidels believe in Christ as the Son of God, and in the truth of his holy religion ? Do they acknowledge the worth of Christianity, and urge its claims upon the attention of the world ?

Turn your attention a moment to the condition of the church during the first four centuries. Then Universalists were treated as Christians, and esteemed as the true followers of Christ. Clemens, a distinguished Universalist, was at the head of one of the largest and most flourishing schools then known. Origen was a celebrated lecturer and commentator, and was regarded, not only by the people, but by the clergy, as one of the greatest and best men of the church. The Universalists were in full fellowship, and belonged to what was termed the orthodox party. This happy state of things continued till the doctrine of endless misery gained the ascendancy, and then Universalism was condemned. It was not, however, till A. D. 553 that it was suppressed.

Thus, for several of the first centuries of the church, Universalists were cordially fellowshipped as true Christians. Nothing was known of those denunciations against them, so common among

the bigotted and illiberal of the present day. Then there was truly an exhibition of the real spirit of the Gospel; for Christians, instead of seeking to devour and destroy each other, lived together like brethren.

How does this union condemn those who are so industrious in accusing us of infidelity, and in dealing out their vials of condemnation! What a lesson could they learn by reading the early history of the church! How far are they behind the early Christians in candor, love, charity and brotherly kindness! How does their deficiency in these virtues serve to disturb the church, hinder the progress of truth, and engender feelings of bitterness and dislike!

I know our opposers justify their course by saying we deny some of the essential doctrines of Christianity. It is true we do deny the doctrine of the trinity and of the eternity of suffering. We look upon these as wholly unscriptural, and entirely without foundation. But suppose we are wrong here, and that these doctrines are true; does that prove that we are not Christians? In order to give a correct answer to this inquiry, we must know whether a perfectly correct faith is essential to constitute a Christian. I do not ask whether we must believe in God and Christ and the Bible to be Christians; but I ask whether we must be *perfectly correct* in all our religious opinions.

Do not give me a hasty answer. Deliberate upon the question. Survey it in all its bearings. Suppose we give an affirmative answer; who would dare say that he is a Christian? What man of information and reflection would claim

that he holds to nothing erroneous? Why, consider the changes of opinion constantly taking place among Christians. Look at the creeds of the popular sects. They are, in many respects, entirely different from what they were twenty years ago. Indeed, every person who reads and thinks for himself, finds frequent occasion to change his opinion on something connected with Christianity. Not only so—we are constantly advancing in religious knowledge. How much light is there now on the Bible, compared with what was possessed fifty years ago! The progress of every sect in knowledge is very great. New truths are constantly being discovered, and old truths are seen in new lights.

How arrogant, then, for any man to say he has discovered all truth; that he has explored the whole field, and knows all that ever will be known! And yet, such is the vain pretence of the man who denounces me as an infidel, because I happen to reject one or two doctrines which he receives.

All Protestants complain of the Catholics, because they claim that their church is infallible and cannot err; but here is something which far outdoes Catholicism; for we are told, not only that the church is right, but that each of its members is infallible; that each one has embraced the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. This is a pretension which none but the ignorant and bigotted would make; for every man of common reflection and information knows that there are many things in Christianity about which we can form no positive opinions. Not only so—in very many things we all differ. Consequently, if a faith

perfectly correct is essential, there cannot be more than one Christian on the earth. Indeed, there is no reason to suppose that there is even one; for it would be highly irrational to conclude that any one man is so infinitely superior to all others.

Not only so; the distinguished clergymen of the few past centuries, to whom we look up with reverence, and whose memory we cherish with profound respect, were not Christians; for in many, very many things, they differed from the men who now compose their denominations. Accordingly, we must condemn as infidels such men as Luther and Calvin; Wesley and Clarke; Gill and Baldwin; and say they have gone to hell.

Perhaps I shall be told a man is not to be condemned for holding a minor error, and that perfect correctness of faith is not essential to the Christian character. This is precisely my opinion; and, therefore, I claim a right to the Christian name, even though it can be proved that I entertain many views which are wrong; for why should a wrong opinion disqualify me to be a Christian, more than any other? If my partialist neighbors can be Christians, while they hold to much that is wrong, why may not Universalists, when they hold to much that is wrong?

I know it will be said—our errors are not of a minor character; that they are cardinal errors, and that the latter disqualify a man to be a Christian, while the former do not.

But who shall decide what are cardinal errors? The Catholics say, that all Protestants hold to cardinal errors, and will be lost. Some Protestants say the same of the Catholics. Different

Protestant sects say the same of each other. Calvinists have denounced the Methodists, and Methodists have denounced the Calvinists. The Baptists too have denounced, and been denounced in the same manner. Would it not be well for those who declare that we are not Christians, to decide first, among themselves, what doctrines are essential to the Christian character, before they condemn us?

Do I hear it said, we reject doctrines which all acknowledge are essential? I answer—this is very far from being the case. There are thousands, who believe in the trinity and endless misery, that acknowledge we have in our denomination many of the best Christians they ever saw. There is scarcely a limitarian church in New England which does not contain those who have no faith in the eternity of suffering, or in the trinity. In very many cases, this is known to the ministers having charge of the churches; but they are willing to retain in full membership such persons, providing they will not very publicly avow their opinions, and will do nothing for their propagation. I have letters now in my possession from an orthodox clergyman, addressed to a member of his church, who had become a Universalist, saying he might retain his membership and be a Universalist; but that, if he persisted in urging his request for a dismission, he would be excommunicated for his faith.

In some churches the principal members are known to be with us in faith; and yet, they are allowed to hold offices, to lead in prayer, and exhort in meeting. Now this would not be, if it were believed no one can be a Christian who

rejects the trinity and the eternity of suffering ; for would any clergyman consent to have an infidel for his deacon or a superintendent in his Sabbath school ?

It is but a few weeks since two Methodist clergymen, of this city, acknowledged to me that a Universalist might be a Christian. Some of you may recollect, that, when our brother Hanscom died, a Methodist paper alluded to his death, and admitted that he died the death of a Christian. It gave as a reason, his faith in the Savior, as expressed in the following hymn, on which he dwelt with inexpressible satisfaction :

“There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins ;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day ;  
O may I there, though vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away !

Dear, dying Lamb ! thy precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till all the ransomed church of God  
Be saved to sin no more.

Ere since by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme  
And shall be till I die.”

That a great proportion of our limitarian friends would agree in saying, the man who thus relied upon his Savior was a Christian, I have no doubt. It is not true, therefore, that they are united in saying we are infidels. We know that such is



not the case. The more candid and sensible and intelligent part of all limitarian sects, are ashamed of the bitter denunciations dealt out against us, and reprobate the course pursued by those of their brethren who have more zeal than knowledge; more sectarianism than love, and more bigotry than candor. I aver, therefore, that our opposers are very far from being agreed in saying, no man can be a Christian who denies the trinity and the eternity of suffering.

But suppose they were agreed in saying this; there would be other important questions to settle, before we could be condemned. They must first decide what the trinity is. Here, however, is a difficulty which cannot be surmounted. There are hardly any two trinitarian writers who state the doctrine of the trinity alike. Bishop Stillingfleet, it has been said, speaks of five different theories. Another writer has discovered forty particulars in which trinitarians are not agreed. He could with the same ease have found forty more.

In a work published some years ago, the author gives a classification of the opinions which have been entertained concerning the trinity, by some of the most eminent English divines; and in this classification, he gives ten different systems which have been adopted. And even here, he says, "we have only the outlines, the elements of general systems, which have been divided and subdivided into innumerable new and peculiar forms, bearing little resemblance to their original." Dr. Gill, in explaining the sense in which God is one, speaks against several forms of the trinity. He says: "Nor is this language to be understood in the Sabellian sense, that God is but one person;

for though there is but one God, there are three persons in the Godhead, which the Sabellians deny; who are so called from one Sabellius, who lived in the middle of the third century: but of this more hereafter. Nor is this doctrine to be understood in a *tritheistic* sense; that is, that there are three essences or beings numerically distinct, which may be said to be but one, because of the same nature; as three men may be said to be one, because of the same human nature; but this is to assert three Gods and not one: this the Trinitarians, indeed, are often charged with, and they as often deny the charge. For they assert that there is but one Divine essence; though there are different modes of subsisting in it, which are called persons; and these possess the whole essence undivided. And this unity is not a unity of parts, which makes one compositum, as the body and soul of man do; for God is a simple and uncompounded Spirit; nor an unity of genus and species, under which may be many singulars of the same kind; but God is one in number and nature, and stands opposed to the polytheism of the heathens, who had gods many and lords many; (1 Cor. viii. 4, 5.) Nor are those passages of Scripture which assert the unity of God, to be appropriated to one person only, to the exclusion of the others; but to be considered as including each."

Here we see the endless diversity of opinion among Trinitarians. Which of these opinions shall we believe? Which is the one essential to the Christian character? When an answer shall have been given to this question, there may be some little propriety in condemning us for not being Trinitarians.

There is the same diversity of opinion in regard to the eternity of suffering. Some think the punishment will consist of a literal fire, and that sinners will be roasted in hell. To prove and illustrate this, Wesley refers to the *linum asbestum*, or incombustible flax, known in most parts of Europe. Cloth made of this may be thrown into the hottest fire, and when taken out again, it will be observed, upon the nicest experiment, not to have lost one grain of its weight. Therefore, he concludes, that if this can remain in the fire without being consumed, the soul may do the same. He says, too, that you may as well talk about immaterial water or earth, as immaterial fire, that both the one and the other is absolute nonsense! And he wishes to know if God intended to frighten his creatures with scarecrows, or vain shadows of things which have no being? Those who adopt this opinion are requested to explain how a material substance can act upon spirit; and show why a spirit should be affected by fire any more than by air or water. Others have said, the punishment will consist in being shut up in a gloomy prison, where the light can never come, and where the sinner will be held in endless bondage with Satan and all his troops of angels. Others have said, it will consist in a horror of conscience; in reflecting upon laws transgressed, offers slighted, favors abused, and time misspent. And others, that it will consist in endless hunger and thirst; in an endless desire after what cannot be obtained. Now the Bible cannot give support to all these views, for they are essentially different from each other; and the question arises, which must we believe? As the

mere assent to language we cannot understand is of no importance, would it not be well to settle which the true doctrine is, before any are condemned for not believing it?

But I fear that I am dwelling too long on this part of our subject. I must, therefore, leave it, and ask your attention to the following question, viz.: If the doctrines of endless misery and the trinity are essential to the Christian character, why did they not make a part of the apostolic confession of faith? This is a question of great importance, and I am anxious that it should be duly considered. The apostolic confession is very brief. It consists of one short article—*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*. It occurs several times in the New Testament. “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”—(John ix. 35.) “I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”—(John xi. 27.) “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.”—(Acts xvi. 31.) “To you, therefore, which believe, he is precious.” (1 Pet. ii. 7.)

There, brethren, is the apostolic confession of faith. It is perfectly simple, and yet comprehensive. But do you find the doctrine of the trinity in it? Do you find the doctrine of endless suffering in it? If not, you have no authority for saying these are essential to the Christian character; for we must conclude that the essential points would have been embraced in the apostolic confession. This is an inference to which all will cheerfully assent; for surely, in the first announcement of Christianity, those doctrines essential to the Christian character would be fully and dis-

tinctly stated; and yet no man will pretend that the doctrines in question are embraced in this confession.

Suppose a case. Here are ten men who present themselves to a limitarian for baptism. He asks them to read his confession of faith. They do so. Five say they can subscribe to it, but five say they cannot. These tell him that they can adopt the apostolic confession; they can believe all that is required in the New Testament; but they cannot believe in all the articles embraced in his creed; they cannot admit the trinity, or the eternity of suffering. Now would they be baptized? Would subscribing to the apostolic confession be satisfactory? All know that it would not; and that the man who should make that confession, and yet deny the trinity and endless misery, would be denounced as an infidel. I do not say all limitarian clergymen would pursue this course; but many, very many, we know would.

Thus, those who denounce us as infidels, are not satisfied with the apostolic confession of Christian faith; and they will not own a man a Christian in belief, when he adopts this confession. They must have something more—they must have an assent to their man-made creeds!

As I have no wish to mislead any who listen to my teachings, I will ask your attention to the connection in which our text is found. "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under

Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning; and sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, go near and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up, and sit with him. The place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer: so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."—(Acts viii. 26—37.) Now in all this, what is said about the trinity? what about the eternity of suffering? If these doctrines are taught here, then we are wrong; if not, then we are right.

Let us turn to the sermon of Peter, delivered on the day of Pentecost. In that he says, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by

miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know : him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain : whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face ; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad ; moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope : because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life ; thou shall make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne : he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, the LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assu-

redly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”—(Acts ii. 22—36.)

Such is the sermon. But does it teach the doctrine of the trinity? Does it give any countenance to the eternity of suffering? What was its effect upon the people? Let the sacred record answer. “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”—(Acts ii. 37—40.) They were pricked in their hearts. They saw that they had crucified the Son of God; and they asked what they must do. But they said nothing about being exposed to endless perdition; nothing about being willing to be damned; nothing about a vicarious atonement.

It will be of no avail to say, other portions of Scripture teach the doctrines in question; for that is a point which has nothing to do with our present discussion. Our position is, that the doctrines in question are not contained in the apostolic confession; and, therefore, if revealed truths, not essential to constitute a Christian.

In the correctness of this opinion I entertain the fullest confidence; for sure I am that the inspired teachers would introduce into their confession of



faith all that is absolutely requisite to make a Christian. They would not leave out the great essentials—the chief doctrines. And yet, this they have done, according to those who denounce us; for they say, though we believe in all truth, save the trinity and the eternity of wo, we are not Christians! Why, then, were not these doctrines included in the apostolic confession? Let the question be answered. Let those who are perpetually crying, *infidel! infidel!* give the answer, or keep silence. We say the Scriptures teach that Christ is the Son of God, and not the eternal Father; and that his death was a manifestation of Divine love. We say, also, they teach that God is the Savior of all men; and that, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, all men will be restored to bliss, and made children of God. We consider these doctrines highly important, and calculated to exert a great practical influence upon the heart, and give a peculiar efficacy to the truths of the gospel. In our view, they have power to draw out the soul in love to God and man, make us live together like brethren, refine the feelings, elevate the affections, and fit us for all the allotments of the Divine Providence. Indeed, we believe, if they universally prevailed, they would convert this world into a paradise. But still, we do not say, they are indispensable to the Christian character, and we allow that there are many good Christians who do not believe them. He that believed Jesus Christ is the Son of God, was recognised, by the Savior and apostles, as a disciple. "He," says John, "who confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and he that confesseth not this, is not of God."

Such is the apostolic confession of Christian faith. Such is the faith essential to make a Christian. He that makes this confession believes in God as the author of all things, and the Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, and feels himself accountable to him for his thoughts, words, and actions. He fears to violate his law, because he knows that Jehovah is a great God, and strict to mark all the iniquity of his people. He knows, also, his righteous disapprobation of sin, and that it is infinitely odious in his sight. He sees this in the expensive measures employed for its destruction, and the rescue of man from its degrading and enslaving power. He, therefore, loathes sin, and turns from it as his worst and most terrible enemy; as that which has done more for the ruin of the hopes and happiness of man than all other causes combined.

But while he sees God's hatred of sin, he sees also his unbounded and unchanging love for the sinner; the infinite riches of his grace in providing redemption for a lost and guilty world. Beholding this, his heart is transported with the liveliest emotions of gratitude and praise; his soul leaps with joy, and sends forth the voice of thanksgiving to the throne of the infinite Father; his eye is lighted up with hope, and he offers a pure spiritual sacrifice, which is more pleasing to God, than to witness countless millions bending in slavish fear before him.

Not only so; he recognises in Jesus the Son of God, the Savior of sinners, who gave himself a ransom for all men; who died the just for the unjust; and through him alone does he look for salvation. He, therefore, receives him as the one

of whom Moses and the prophets spake ; who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities ; who, though rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich ; who died for our offences, and rose again for our justification. When he sees the greatness of the sacrifice made, and realizes the vastness of the Savior's love, his heart heaves with the deepest emotions of penitence and gratitude, and he meekly throws himself at the foot of the cross, saying,

"Alas! and did my Savior bleed?  
And did my Jesus die?  
Would he devote his sacred head  
For such a worm as I?

Was it for crimes that I had done  
He groaned upon the tree?  
Amazing pity! grace unknown!  
And love beyond degree!

But floods of tears can ne'er repay  
The debt of love I owe:  
Here, Lord, I give myself away;  
'T is all that I can do."

Nor is this all. He that makes the apostolic confession, acknowledges Jesus as a teacher from God. He goes to him for truth, and receives all his instructions as divine. He studies to obey his commands, and walk in his footsteps. He owns that

"God, in the gospel of his Son,  
Makes his eternal counsels known,  
And sinners of an humble frame,  
May taste his grace, and learn his name."

Now, why cannot such a faith constitute a Christian? In what consists its defect? Wherein is it wanting in power to lift the soul above the dominion of sin, and illumine it with the splendors of truth? Why can it not soften the heart, humble it before God, and make it rely for salvation on the mercy of Jesus? Why can it not work by love, and elevate the affections? It can. It can do all things. It can make us love God with all the soul, and our neighbor as we love ourselves. It can turn us away from sin, and make us delight in prayer and praise. It can open our whole heart to the influence of love divine, and inspire with a hope which will sustain the afflicted in the darkest scenes of trial.

Let me urge you, therefore, to seek for faith in the Lord Jesus. Reflect upon his character; upon the miracles he wrought; the doctrines he proclaimed; the death he died; and I know you will be constrained to say, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

## SERMON VIII.

### EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION.

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O taste and see that the Lord is good.—Ps. xxxiv. 8.

I HAVE selected these words for the purpose of discoursing on experimental religion. By this, I mean, a religion which has its seat in the heart, which sanctifies the affections.

There are many theoretical Christians. They acknowledge the existence of a God, the mission of Christ, and the divinity of the Gospel; but their feelings are averse to religion; their hearts are set upon the world, and they are strangers to the spirit of devotion. They may be likened to a son who has been alienated from his parents by the evil influences which have been exerted over him. Though he will still own them as parents, and acknowledge their right to direct his steps, his heart is averse to them; he feels a spirit of insubordination; his wishes have no agreement with theirs; he loves the way of sin. So with *the* merely theoretical Christian. While his

understanding acknowledges the truth of the gospel, his heart gives no response to its requisitions; he has no real pleasure in its worship; he loves the world and its sinful amusements. He may listen with satisfaction to an ingenious and logical preacher, or to a fine orator, who charms by the richness of his voice, and the beauty of his style; but his heart is not enlisted in religion; it is not reconciled to God; it does not pant after God, and thirst for the waters of salvation.

Hence, the great aim of the gospel is to reach the heart, and wake into action all our religious faculties; to make us grateful for our mercies, and love him who is the perfection of goodness. Therefore, the Savior says, all the law and prophets hang on the commands requiring us to love God with all the heart, and our neighbor as we love ourselves. God says, "My son give me thine heart;" that is, give me thine affections. He commands us to set our hearts on things above; that is, have our affections set on things above. He calls upon us to cleanse our hearts, or eradicate all evil wishes and purposes.

The reason why the heart is thus required, is perfectly obvious. It is the fountain whence the stream flows—it is the mainspring of action, and controls the life. From the heart come wars, and fightings, and murders; and, therefore, the character will correspond to the state of the heart. Hence, we read of hearts fully set to do evil, of a froward heart, a rebellious heart, an evil heart, a hard, stony heart, and of a heart that deviseth mischief. Besides, the heart is the seat of happiness and misery. When it is the abode of the Christian virtues—when they grow and flourish

there, like herbage in green pastures beside the still waters, we are happy—happy, whether living in a cottage or palace, or dwelling with strangers far from the home of our youth. But if the heart be the abode of envy, hatred and revenge, we are miserable—miserable, however great the pomp and splendor in which we live, or however numerous the worldly honors with which we are loaded.

Accordingly, those of impure hearts are represented as in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity; as shut up in the kingdom of darkness; and that, too, while they give assent to all of the essential truths of the Bible. Thieves, drunkards and liars may admit every doctrine of Christianity, and have a distinct and comprehensive view of the same, and yet continue in their wicked ways.

It is not enough, then, simply to enlighten the understanding; the heart must be reached, or the work of salvation is not effected; the heart must be made to feel, or it is a stranger to the raptures of religion. Whoso loveth is born of God. I say therefore, again, it is not enough for the understanding to give a bare assent to Christianity.

Suppose a case. Here is a man who is surrounded with the blessings essential to render life happy. He has wealth, and all the luxuries it can furnish. He is blessed with a kind and faithful companion; with fond and devoted children, with health and all the means of enjoyment. He has understanding, and knows his duty; but unfortunately his heart is wrong. He dislikes his home; he has no regard for his wife and children; he is the slave of vice; and, consequently, to him home is void of charms; he finds no happiness there; it is the abode of darkness and wretched-

ness. But let him be changed. Let his heart become pure, and love take the place of hatred, and then his home is resplendent with light; he is in a new world, and is a new creature. It is not, however, because he knows more, or understands his relations and duty better; but because he now feels, and his heart is alive to a sense of his obligations.

So, a man may know, in one sense, the truths of Christianity, and see the evidences of God's wisdom, power, greatness, and love in all things, and yet live enslaved to sin. What is more beautiful than the hymn, commencing,

"Thou art, O God, the life and light,  
Of all this wond'rous world we see;  
Its glow by day, its smile by night  
Are but reflections caught from thee;  
Where'er we turn, thy glories shine,  
And all things fair and bright are thine!"

But this hymn, so full of beauty and truth, was composed on the morning after a night of drunkenness and revelry! Its author saw truth simply with his intellectual eye. His heart was not sanctified, and controlled by the word of life; old things with him had not passed away, and all things become new. Many of the greatest astronomers have been among the most undevout men of the world; and many of the most eloquent and stirring preachers have lived in the practice of gross and degrading vices. With such, truth "plays round the head, but comes not near the heart;" it renovates not the inner man; they have eyes to see, but see not; ears to hear, but hear not; hearts to understand, but understand not; and never, till their hearts *feel*, and are made pure,



will they be enabled to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. When they taste and see that the Lord is good, they will realize the preciousness of the Gospel, and feel the bliss arising from a consciousness that they are children of God, and heirs of endless felicity. Then they can cry Abba, Father ; then they dwell in God, and God in them ; Christ is formed in them the hope of glory ; they have passed from death unto life ; they are created anew in the likeness of Jesus ; they have received the spirit of adoption ; God's love is perfected in them.

This change is thus happily described by Watts:

“When God revealed his gracious name,  
And changed my mournful state,  
My rapture seemed a pleasing dream,  
The grace appeared so great.”

The heart, then, must feel, and be tuned to sing the praise of God, or we are not Christians. We must feel as did the poet, when he sung,

“My God, what silken cords are thine !  
How soft and yet how strong !  
For power, and truth, and grace combine  
To draw our souls along.

When crushed beneath the heavy yoke  
Of folly and of sin,  
Thy hand our iron bondage broke,  
Our grateful hearts to win.”

Such are our views on experimental religion. We would be the last to deny that religion has its seat in the heart ; the last to say it is a cold assent of the understanding to the truths of the Bible. In this respect we do not differ from those sects who are constantly charging us with being

destitute of vital godliness. Our religion is one of love, of pure and ardent love to God and man. We can say with the apostle, "Whom having not seen we love."

But while we hold thus to experimental religion, we do not believe that it is produced by any supernatural agency. We believe it is the result of the action of truth, and that our feelings are enlisted in religion, in the same manner that they are enlisted in any other cause. No one will say that friendship has not its seat in the heart; that it is not something we experience. Neither will it be said that filial love is not experimental. And yet both of these are produced by impressions which kindness, attention, and goodness make. We have, then, natural faculties susceptible of friendship and love. Parents love their children. They are endowed with a faculty for this, which is called into action by the children that are given them.

We also have faculties which render us capable of loving God, venerating his name, and offering to him the sacrifices of a contrite spirit; and the action of these faculties gives to us those religious feelings which characterize the true Christian. Therefore, we have experimental religion when our religious faculties are rendered active; when our feelings of veneration, love and hope are so excited as to make us bow in reverence before our Maker, adore him with all the heart, and hope in the riches of his mercy.

This, I know, is different from the common opinion. It is generally supposed that by nature we have no religious faculties; and that we are wholly incapable of loving God without the special

agency of his Spirit; that we have no more power to become Christians than to work miracles. But if this be the case, I would ask why we are commanded to love one another? And why are we commanded to love God with all the soul? These commands presuppose that we have power to obey them; for God is not an unreasonable being; he requires nothing beyond the ability of his children. I believe, therefore, that we are just as capable of becoming Christians as we are of speaking the truth, loving our friends, sympathizing with the afflicted, or dealing justly. We have only to use the means which have been provided, and give up our hearts, and say with Paul, what wilt thou have me to do? and we shall feel those holy emotions which render us devout and joyful.

If I am not right in supposing that we are naturally endowed with religious faculties, we must obtain them when converted. But this would be a miracle, and would prove that conversion is not turning the heart to the Lord, reconciling it to his law; but the creation of religious faculties. This, however, cannot be; for the days of miracles are passed. Miracles have answered the purpose for which they were designed; they have established the truth of Christianity, and given us a sure guide to heaven. If, then, there is no miracle, there is no creation of any new faculties.

New faculties! Look at this idea a moment. Allow me to introduce here the opinions of a Presbyterian writer.\* He says,—

\* Duffield on Regeneration, p. 457.

"Spiritual illumination does not consist in any *change* wrought on the *essence* of the human mind. Such a change would make us no longer *human* beings. Let the essential mind be converted into that of an angel, or seraph, or new order of intelligent creatures, and it will no longer be a human soul; for by the very terms of the supposition, it is *essentially* changed.

"Neither does spiritual illumination consist in some newly created *disposition* anterior to, but the appropriate cause, or immediate original of the mind's perceptions of the truth. In so saying, we do not mean that feelings elicited have not an influence on the mind's perceptions; but simply that there is no peculiar foundation, or *fons actionis*, laid in, or superadded to, the constitutional capacities and susceptibilities of the moral creature man, by any exercise of *creative* power on the part of God. This, too, would be to change the constitutional nature of the being, were such a thing in reality to take place. \* \* \* \*

"Neither does spiritual illumination consist in the communication of any *new faculty*, or *sense*, or *instinct*, to the soul. For, if so, then it follows, as in the former case, that the subject of it ceases to be a human being. We may be unable to know what they might do with it, yet we can conceive it possible that there should be creatures, whom the power of God may create, having all *our* senses, and one or more superadded. The addition of these new senses would constitute them creatures of a different constitutional nature from ourselves; and should *we*, by any exercise of Divine power, become similarly endowed, we should cease to be human beings. The same

things hold true, with respect to our intellectual, as well as to our sensitive nature. Say that our minds have been rendered capable of new, or angelic *modes* of thought, and we have ceased to be men. Besides, if illumination consists in perceptions, through a new sense, or by means of a new faculty, or instinct, created in the soul, the unregenerate man is no more under obligation to understand and approve of spiritual things, and act accordingly, than the blind man can be, to perceive and understand colors, or the deaf man sounds. Without the capacity or faculty requisite to perceive and understand the truth, all moral obligation would cease; and, accordingly, the Savior has authorized us to believe, that the ignorance and blindness of men, on spiritual subjects, is not owing to the destitution of any of the natural faculties or capacities for mental action, employed in the perception of truth. Whatever derangement sin may have produced in our moral nature, one thing is certain—it has not robbed us of any distinctive power, or capacity, with which we were originally endowed by our great Creator. It is not a necessary consequence of the fall, that any of the natural operations of the human mind should be destroyed. \* \* \*

“Nor does spiritual illumination consist in removing any natural *imbecility* of mind, or “depravation of the faculty” of understanding, which may be supposed to prevent the exercise of the intellectual powers in the perception of spiritual truth. \* \* \*

“Neither does illumination consist in any new and peculiar mode of mere intellectual perception of truth. For both the renewed and the unre-

newed possess the same *essential* capacities, and are governed by the same general laws of thought. And the former, sustaining no change in the essence of their being, nor receiving any super-added faculty or sense, *their* intellectual operations cannot differ, essentially, from those of the latter." \* \* \*

Such are the views of this writer. They are my views. I feel as certain that they are right, as I do that God commands the sinner to love him. Every man, then, has those faculties, which enable him to comply with the requisitions of the gospel.

An objection may here be raised. It may be said that conversion is represented as the work of God and of the Spirit; whereas, if our views are right, man converts himself. There is no difficulty here. Conversion is the work of God, of truth, and man. Do not fear that I am about to lead you into the mysticism in which this subject is usually involved. I do not believe there is any mysticism connected with it. I can see it in the clear sun-light of truth. The Savior borrowed figures, to illustrate truth, from the operations of nature. We may do the same. Look, then, at the husbandman. He tills his land; he commits the seed to the bosom of the earth; he watches its growth, and aids it by all the culture which is required; and in the autumn his heart is gladdened by a bountiful harvest. Thus the husbandman raises his produce. But he is not the only agent employed. The warming and invigorating sun, the refreshing rain and gentle dew, and the luxuriant earth, all co-operate with him in his labors. Besides—there is the agency exerted by

that great Being who is ever omnipresent, and without whose aid nothing can be done. The fruits of autumn, therefore, may be termed the gifts of God, the productions of nature, or the rewards of human labor.

There is this threefold agency in the conversion of man. He converts himself by using the means placed in his hands. He is converted by the Divine word, because that enlightens and turns him from evil. He is converted by God, because he provided the word, and gives it power to soften, humble, and cleanse the heart. There is no contradiction, therefore, in the following testimonies: "He saved us by the washing of regeneration."—(Titus iii. 15.) "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."—(2 Cor. v. 19.) "That he might redeem us from all iniquity."—(Titus ii. 14.) "We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—(2 Cor. v. 20.) "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."—(Matt. iv. 17.) "The words that I speak unto you—they are spirit, and they are life."—(John vi. 63.) "But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."—(Heb. iv. 2.) In these quotations, the sinner is represented as being redeemed by God, also by the gospel, and also by himself; and thus they describe the agency of God, of the word, and of the creature. When, therefore, I say man is able to become a Christian, I do not mean that he can do this without the aid of God and his word, any more than that he can raise the products of the earth, without the aid of God and his established laws. All I say, is, that by using the means which have been provided, he has the ability to make himself *wise unto salvation*.

This view of the subject accords with the different expressions employed to describe the work of conversion. It is called *washing* and *cleansing*; *restoring* and *redeeming*; *enlightening* and *reconciling*; *turning* and *subjecting*.

Now, to purify, implies the existence of something good within the heart; otherwise there is nothing to undergo the process of purification. To restore and redeem, imply that our powers have been perverted from the end for which they were designed, and that they can be rescued from that perversion. To enlighten, implies that we have powers capable of understanding the truth. To reconcile, is to bring to agreement those in a state of opposition. To turn, is to change from one course or state to another; and to subject, is to bring under the dominion of another. Thus every term employed is against the idea that conversion is the creation of a new faculty, and fully justifies us in saying, that the only difference between the converted and unconverted is in their principles, motives and desires.

But you will say, "This change is called a new creation; a new birth,\* and therefore it must

\* "But what is spiritual birth? Birth—birth, is the coming forth to light, to conscious, manifest existence, to visible life and action, of something which before was neither seen nor known. Yet, in order that anything may be born, it must have existed beforehand, in some secret, unnoticed, invisible form. Those who tell us that we are without any spark or power of holiness, and then add that we must be regenerated, or born of the Spirit, seem to forget all the laws and analogies of nature. If holiness can be born from us, the germ of holiness must already have an existence within us. It could not be born, that is, brought out to the light, if it did not exist in secret.



be something more than having the heart redeemed from evil, and brought under the dominion of religion." This objection presents no difficulty; for we are required to make ourselves a new heart. "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit."—(Eze. xviii. 31.) We are also commanded to put on the new man. "Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."—(Eph. iv. 22—24.) "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."—(Col. iii. 9, 10.) Now if this new creation were the creation of new faculties, there would be no reason in these commands: for no man has power thus to create. Besides, to be created anew is to cast away our sins, to cease from evil, to have our affections sanctified by love; for what is expressed by the phrases "put off the old man," "put on the new," "new creature," "created anew," a "new heart," is also expressed by the phrases "cease to do evil,

Here, then, we may find a simple and correct definition of spiritual regeneration—of being born of the Spirit. It is the calling out into a life of active power, of progressive strength, and of increasingly earnest effort, of the spiritual principle within our nature. It is the bringing forth to conscious, visible existence, of the religious capacities of man. Unless a man is the subject of this birth, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—*G. E. Ellis on Regeneration.*

learn to do well," "remember and turn to the Lord," "renewed in knowledge," "save his people from their sins." Isaiah says: "Wash you, make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."—(Isa. i. 16, 17.) Hence the converted are new creatures, not because they have new natures or faculties, but because their principles, and motives, and habits are new. They are new in character; have new thoughts, desires and associations. Such a change can very properly be denominated a new creation, and all who experience it may justly be termed new creatures.

Perhaps it will be said, the Scriptures speak of a more direct agency than we have allowed in the work of conversion, and declare that the Comforter should come, and reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and judgment. It will be said, too, that this Comforter came on the day of Pentecost, when by its agency three thousand souls were converted in a day. I would by no means deny that the Comforter came as here specified; but I see in this no evidence that the Holy Spirit has now any supernatural agency in the work of conversion; or that it then had any such agency in conversion as is generally supposed. To be convinced of this, we must consider, 1. That the gift of the Holy Ghost was subsequent to repentance. Thus Peter says, "Repent and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."—(Acts ii. 38.) The same idea is taught in the following words: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour; to

give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things ; and so is also the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey him.”—(Acts v. 31, 32. See also Acts viii. 14—17.) Thus repentance preceded the gift of the Holy Ghost, and consequently could not have been produced by its direct agency on the heart. 2. To give the Holy Ghost, was endowing with miraculous power. Of this we have the most abundant proof. “ And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”—(Acts ii. 2—4.) Joel prophesied of this ; for Peter says—“ But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel : And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams : and on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit ; and they shall prophesy.”—(Acts ii. 16—18.) We learn the same from Acts x. 44—46 : “ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” The gift, then, of the Holy

Ghost, was the gift of miraculous powers. But none have these powers now ; and none, therefore, in this sense, have the Holy Ghost given them.

Let it not be said, the conversions on the day of Pentecost must have been miraculous, because such numbers were converted ; for we can easily account for the effects produced. The gift of tongues was sufficient to show that God was with his servants, and make the people believe the word proclaimed. And such was the effect. " And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak, Galileans ? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born ? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, what meaneth this ? " —(Acts ii. 5—12.) When Peter perceived their amazement, he lifted up his voice, and spoke of the fulfilment of the Divine predictions in what they then saw ; discoursed concerning the messiahship of Jesus ; the wickedness of the Jews in crucifying him, and the wonderful interposition

of God in raising him from the dead. This preaching convinced the people that the gospel was Divine, and made them ask, What must we do? His answer was, Repent, and be baptized, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Thus it was beholding the miracles and hearing the truth that led to repentance; for the outpouring of the Spirit succeeded repentance.

These miracles and gifts were bestowed not only on the Jewish, but also on the Gentile converts, and all who had them could cast out devils, speak with new tongues, safely take up serpents, and drink deadly poison, and heal the sick.—(Mark xvi. 17, 18.) Not only were the converted thus endowed with miraculous power, but also with supernatural wisdom; the Spirit led them into all truth essential to establish the kingdom of Christ.—(1 Cor. xiii. 1—13.)

This power was never designed to be perpetuated in the Christian church; it was promised to the end of the age, or during the lifetime of the apostles.—(Matt. xxviii. 20.) There are, I know, many who profess to be miraculously guided by the Spirit; but they have never wrought a single miracle, neither do they agree in regard to truth. Some believe in the trinity, total depravity, reprobation to endless misery, and a hell of literal fire; and others deny the whole of these notions. Now, as the Holy Spirit cannot teach error, we have no reason to suppose any among us are supernaturally taught of God; and all who claim such endowments are impostors and deceivers, and deserve the brand of infamy.

Perhaps we shall be told, that though none now have miraculous power or knowledge, they *have that special influence exerted upon them by*

the Divine Spirit, which opens the eyes of their understanding and makes them new creatures. To this I answer,

1. Such an idea rests wholly on assumption. God never promised to perpetuate a miraculous influence, beyond the end of the Jewish age.

2. All those texts, which speak of a Divine influence, that do not describe the miraculous gifts conferred in the apostolic age, refer to that control which God exerts through the instrumentality of his agents. Thus he influences us by the bounties of nature, by calamity, sickness, the death of friends, and his revealed system of truth. Any effect produced by these, may be said to be produced by his spirit. For instance, we are said to be born of the spirit; (John iii. 8;) also to be born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God; (1 Peter i. 23;) to be sanctified by the Holy Ghost; (Rom. xv. 16;) also, by the word of God; (1 Tim. iv. 5;) to be washed by the spirit; (1 Cor. vi. 11;) also by the Divine word; (Eph. v. 26.) It appears, therefore, that these are convertible terms. This is confirmed by the fact, that the phrases, spirit of God, spirit of Christ, spirit of grace, spirit of truth, spirit of wisdom, are employed to denote the power of God, Christ, grace, truth and wisdom. Thus, when God is said by his spirit to have garnished the heavens, (Job xxvi. 13,) it means he garnished them by his power; when man is said to have the spirit of judgment, (Isa. xviii. 6,) it means he has the power of judgment; and when he is said to be strengthened by the spirit of God, (Eph. iii. 16,) it means he is strengthened by his power.

Spirit not only denotes power, but also ~~tem~~

per or quality. Thus, to be filled with the spirit of wisdom, (Exod. xxviii. 3,) is to be wise; to have the spirit of faith, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of meekness, is to have faith, holiness, and meekness. So, to have the spirit of bondage, the spirit of error and the spirit of jealousy, is to have these bad qualities. Thus, to be led by the spirit, is to be led by the good temper which the gospel produces; to have the spirit of adoption, is to have our hearts in unison with God; to have the spirit of God, is to have that frame of mind which makes us delight in prayer and praise and doing good; and to have the spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are born of God, is to have our hearts in accordance with our judgment. There is, therefore, now no supernatural agency of the spirit.

3. The gospel is the great agent employed to enlighten the mind, reconcile the heart, and direct the sinner to God. St. Paul says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher."—(Rom. x. 13, 14.) He also says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."—(Rom. x. 17.) The Savior says, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."—(John xvii. 17.) He commissioned his apostles to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" and declared that all who believed would be saved, and all who did not, would be damned.—(Mark xvi. 15, 16.) "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth."—(Rom.) "In Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel."—(1 Cor. iv. 15.)

Thus, men are converted and made anew by the agency of truth. By this, they are cleansed and born into the kingdom. By this they are made to feel that Divine influence which turns from vice to virtue, and translates the soul into the glorious liberty of Christ Jesus. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The gospel is not only a ministration of the spirit, but it is spirit; it has a spiritual character, and is fitted to produce spiritual life. By revealing the infinite love of God, it makes us love him with all the heart; by quickening conscience, it arouses us to a sense of our duty and our sins; by teaching our relations one to another, it renders us kind and affectionate; by unfolding the glories of heaven, it inspires us with a hope which the shadows of death cannot dim. While, therefore, we deny that conversions are produced by a supernatural agency, we do not deny that religion is experimental. We know that it has its seat in the heart, and produces those delightful emotions which thrill it with joy. We know that it sanctifies the affections, and renders Jesus the chief among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely. We know that all who have tasted of Divine goodness, have passed from death unto life; from darkness to light; from bondage to freedom; from sorrow to joy. They live in a new world; they have new emotions and desires; new chords of the soul vibrate, and new hopes cheer and sustain them. They read the Bible with a new interest, and engage with a pleasure never before known in the worship of God. They are under the dominion of love; they are born of love; they dwell in love, and love in them.



## SERMON IX.

### THE PRACTICE OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN.

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And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.—2 PETER i. 5—7.

THE character of a Christian, as presented in the New Testament, is the most perfect and excellent of any sustained by human beings. It is not only free from all vice, but enriched by all the virtues that can dignify and ennoble, or render one amiable, useful and happy. The Christian is termed a "righteous man;" said to be a follower of God and Christ; represented as doing as he would be done by, and overcoming evil with good. He is true to all those great principles which have been unfolded by the pen of inspiration, and which give order, prosperity and peace to all who regard them. He has courage,\* knowledge, temperance,

\* The word rendered virtue, in the text, signifies courage, and the word charity, universal love.

patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and universal love.

To a consideration of this character, I shall ask your attention in the present discourse. It is one with which we should all be familiar, that we may know what the Master requires, and have a distinct idea of the work for which we should aim.

#### I. CHRISTIAN COURAGE.

In all ages of the church, the gospel has been bitterly and perseveringly opposed. Its believers have endured many tribulations, have been slain with the sword, and have had trials of cruel mockings, scourgings, bonds and imprisonments. The lonely desert, the cold mountain, and the gloomy cave have been their home, and witnessed the fervor of their prayers.

The Master foresaw this opposition, and sought to prepare his followers for the trials they would have to encounter. He told them that the Lord God was a shield and a high tower, the rock of safety; and that, however wronged, oppressed and injured, they should never be forgotten or forsaken; and that all their trials should be overruled for good. They should, therefore, be in nothing terrified by opposition; but buckle on the whole armor of God, and fight manfully the good fight of faith. The fear of man should not deter them, for a single moment, from going forward, and openly avowing and defending their views; for if Jehovah was their defence, of whom should they be afraid? This courage is a necessary consequence of faith; because he that believes God is the righteous Governor of the world; that he guards and defends the interests of the good; and that the gospel of Jesus is his truth, will never

for a moment falter in regard to the safety of the path of duty. He will be assured of protection; and rather than yield to error, or deny the convictions of his soul, he will become an outcast, die in prison, or perish at the stake.

This is the courage of the Christian. The want of it makes thousands hide their light, and give support to errors which they abhor.

Advantage has been taken of this weakness, in every period of the church. The dominant party has always sought to prevent inquiry, and awe dissenters into submission, either by the terror of the civil power, or the force of scorn, contempt, reproach, and the loss of influence and wealth.

It is so now. The enemies of truth are perpetually devising means to oppress and injure those who will not bow at their altar. All the influence that abuse, misrepresentation, scandal and wealth can exert, is employed; and nothing is left undone which will build up a barrier against the progress of liberal principles. Courage, then, is requisite to stand up for truth in defiance of bigotry and sectarianism, and the machinations of priestcraft. And while an enemy remains to fight against the cause of God, or one can be found who will seek, by any other than fair and honorable means, to check the march of truth, this courage will be essential. It is essential, also, in order to be frank and free in the avowal of opinions, differing from those held by the candid and sincere. Many dare not dissent from the popular voice, even when that voice is never heard uttering the language of censure or condemnation. They want the courage that can speak in the presence of honest opposers; *that*, in the circle of fashion, in the walks of liter-

ature, and in the home of a friend, can offer a word for the truth. They want the courage, too, that can brook the speech of the giddy, the laugh of scorners, and the ridicule of infidels, and come out, and openly take the Christian name. The true Christian, then, fears nothing but that which is wrong. He fears sin—he fears to violate conscience; but what man can do, he fears not; and though all the world arrays itself against him, he will obey God, and be the open, unshrinking and uncompromising friend of truth. He will give up friends, and liberty, and influence, and property, rather than deny his Lord. Place him in the ranks of the wicked, to fight for the overthrow of truth, and you will find him trembling with fear; but let him be conscious that he is doing battle for truth, and he has the courage of the lion. He can exultingly say,

“God is my strong salvation;  
What foe have I to fear?  
In darkness and temptation,  
My Light, my Help is near.

Though hosts encamp about me,  
Firm to the fight I stand;  
What terror can confound me  
With God at my right hand?”

## II. KNOWLEDGE.

St. Peter commands Christians to be always ready to give to every man that asketh, a reason for the hope within them. But in order to be thus ready, they must seek for knowledge, and labor assiduously to make themselves acquainted with the truth. There are many ways of gaining religious knowledge. We can do it,

1. By reading the Bible. This is the source of all true wisdom. In this, God speaks to man concerning his duty and destination. The Bible, then, should be the Christian's constant companion. He should read it daily, and with undivided attention. He should study it, and make its teachings the subjects of searching investigation.

It is not enough to read the Bible for form's sake. Thousands read it daily in this manner, but they are no wiser for what they read. They treasure up nothing. Such seem to fancy that there is a particular virtue in reading daily a portion of it, even though they make no advance in a knowledge of the truth. This is an entire mistake. We are benefited by reading the Bible from what we learn, and the impressions made upon our hearts, the same as we are benefited by reading other books. We should always, therefore, seek to understand and remember what we read. Then we shall add to our courage, knowledge.

2. Reading the works of learned and pious men is a means of gaining knowledge. The world, we know, contains many books, which can be of no possible service to any inquirer after truth. There are, however, some of inestimable value, and which are great helps in understanding the Bible. Let these be perused; let them be studied; and they will be found to expand the mind, to enrich it with the treasures of true knowledge, and make it strong in the Lord.

3. Preaching is a means of knowledge. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," was the Savior's command to his holy Apostles. The Gospel! It is the plan of man's redemption; it is a revelation of the infinite

love and mercy of God, and the inexhaustible riches of heaven ; it is all those great and glorious doctrines, those wise and perfect precepts, which God has given to the world through his inspired servants. How greatly, then, will he be edified, who listens from Sabbath to Sabbath to a well instructed minister of Christ. New views will be often presented for his consideration ; old views brought to his remembrance, and presented in new lights. Difficulties will be cleared up, scripture explained ; the manners, laws and customs of the country in which the Bible was written will be described, so that the patient and attentive hearer cannot fail of being much aided in his growth in knowledge. Let all, therefore, who wish to be thoroughly versed in the Bible, be constant in their attendance at the house of God.

4. Meditation is a means of obtaining knowledge. Those persons who never meditate upon what they hear and read, obtain comparatively but little knowledge. The food received into the human system, would not nourish and invigorate it, did it not undergo the process of digestion. So with what we hear and read. Unless we make it the subject of thought, and revolve it in the mind, it will do us but little service. We should be like the Psalmist, who said, " O how I love thy law ! It is my meditation all the day."

5. Conversation is a means of knowledge. I can conceive of nothing more profitable, than for a family to spend a portion of each day in reading and conversing upon a chapter of Scripture. How delightful would it be to devote a part of each evening in this profitable manner ! If the Bible, religious books, or any instructive works

were thus studied, Christians would be well instructed, and be indeed lights of the world. Perhaps all families are not situated so as to adopt this course; but all can converse upon useful topics; all can commence or close the Sabbath by such an exercise; all can make the subjects to which they have listened at church topics of conversation. And if they do it, they will not only impart light to each other, but have deeply imprinted upon their minds what they have read and heard.

These, then, are some of the ways in which knowledge can be obtained; and in these ways the Christian will seek for the improvement of his mind. It will be his delight to listen to the Gospel, read God's word, peruse the works of the learned, meditate upon Christian truth, and converse upon religious subjects.

### III. TEMPERANCE.

This is an important virtue of the Christian. It "consists in a confirmed habit of governing all the affections, appetites and passions of our nature, in a proper manner, by placing our affections on proper objects, by restraining our angry passions, and by gratifying our appetites in moderation." The strictly temperate man avoids all excess. I wish to have the language I employ particularly marked. I say all excess. There is more than one kind of intemperance. Those who ruin their health, waste their intellectual energies, and squander their property by the use of intoxicating drinks, are by no means the only ones guilty of intemperance. All are guilty of it who do not keep their appetites and passions under proper

subjection, and who allow the animal man to subjugate the rational.

Intemperance, thus defined, is extensively prevalent. Thousands are its complete slaves who are looked upon as patterns of temperance. Many who are the loudest in denouncing the use of intoxicating drinks, and the most active in carrying forward what is termed the temperance reform, are in perfect bondage to their appetites, and are actually prostrating their intellectual and physical energies by excess. It is not enough, therefore, that we abstain entirely from the use of intoxicating drinks; that we do not touch what will make us drunkards, and shut us out of the kingdom of God; the whole animal man must be in subjection to the inner man. Reason must bear sway, and the works of the flesh, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings, murders, and revellings, must all be avoided. We must be cleansed from all the filthiness of the flesh; we must not walk in the lusts of the flesh or fulfil its desires; we must not be ruled by the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes or the pride of life; but we must be governed by the spirit, and have its fruits, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance. All such have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. They eat and drink to live, not live to eat and drink. They are directed by those perfect rules which keep the mind serene, the heart pure, and the physical man in the enjoyment of health.

Without this temperance no person can keep himself in the love of God, or follow in the foot-



steps of the Savior. The moment appetite and passion triumph over reason and conscience, we lose our spiritual life, and become dead ; our liberty is taken away, and we are enslaved. Let the Christian, therefore, ever study to be temperate in all things.

#### IV. PATIENCE.

Affliction is the common lot of man. There is no path we can pursue but what is beset with sorrows ; and no religion we can believe that will give us security against sickness, the loss of property and friends. God has ordained that in our journey on earth, we shall have a mixture of prosperity and adversity, and drink from the cup of bitterness as well as the cup of joy.

Christianity was not designed to change this arrangement. Its great office is to render us patient under our afflictions, and give us strength to bear what God sees fit to lay upon us. And this it has peculiar power to do. It not only shows that all affliction is ordered by the infinite Father, but that it is designed for a beneficial end, and will work out an eternal weight of glory. Thus, let stormy clouds darken the horizon of his existence, and calamity after calamity crowd upon him, and the Christian murmurs not ; he is submissive under all that God ordains. If wealth does not accumulate so fast as he desires, he utters no complaint ; if he meets with loss, and sees his possessions swept away, he bows in meekness to the appointment of God ; if he is doomed to the gloomy prison for conscience sake, or is laid for years upon a bed of sickness ; he utters no complaint against the government of Heaven.

This patience is no ordinary virtue. Without

it, the pains of sickness, the opposition of the wicked, the wrongs of the treacherous, and the oppressions of the heartless, cannot be endured. The patient in spirit are always calm and happy, and are never found giving utterance to the language of irritation, anger or revenge. Though they may have courage to encounter evil, they are perfectly resigned when that comes which cannot be averted. The Christian, then, is always patient—he is patient when provoked and wronged—patient when laid upon the bed of suffering—and patient when delays are experienced in the accomplishment of his designs.

#### V. GODLINESS.

Godliness, it has been said, is piety towards God; a deep reverential religious fear; not only worshipping God with every becoming outward act, but adoring, loving and magnifying him in the heart. The correctness of this definition, I presume none will dispute. Hence we may say,

1. The godly will be punctual in their attendance upon Divine worship. They will attend church, not to see the fashions, or hear a display of oratory, but to worship God. They will listen with attention to the preacher, not to criticise his style or manner, but to gain knowledge and have their souls deeply impressed. They will draw near to God, not with their lips, but with their hearts, and offer him the sacrifices of a broken and contrite spirit. They will delight to honor the Savior, and assemble around his table to celebrate the wonders of his dying love. In his name, they will pray to the Father, if not in the house of public prayer, in the family circle, or in the closet of devotion. To them prayer is both a

duty and a privilege, and often do they commune with their Maker. They believe that

"Prayer ardent opens heaven, lets down a stream  
Of glory on the consecrated hour  
Of man in audience with the Deity."

But godliness is not confined to the temple of worship and the hour of prayer ; it goes with man in all the walks of life, and regulates his actions in all the circumstances of his existence. It makes him keep the Sabbath day holy, and not devote it to labor, travel or amusement. It makes him reverence the name of God, and guard his lips against every species of profaneness. It makes him shun the vanities and follies of the world, and commands him not to waste his days in guilty pleasures, or engage in amusements which are not proper and useful. It will not permit him to be gloomy and sad, but guards him against unbecoming levity and frivolity. It will not suffer him to be austere and tyrannical, but renders him amiable and just in all his ways. Thus the godly are conformed to the Divine will, and are assimilated to the Divine character. They deny worldly lusts, and live soberly and righteously. But the ungodly are not so. They dig up evil, and in their lips is a burning fire ; they scorn judgment and devour iniquity ; they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness ; they are censorious and bitter ; they speak evil of their neighbors ; they practice fraud and deception, and their conduct tends to subvert the order and destroy the peace of society.

If I am right, godliness is goodness, and every man is godly in proportion to his goodness. Many I know entertain the idea that godliness is some-

thing separate from goodness, and hold those up as pious who in real excellency of character fall far below a man whom they would denounce as ungodly. Hear Rev. H. Malcom : " Suppose the husband to possess the highest degree of mere human excellence, in disposition and habits, and the utmost respect for religious forms. Suppose him honorable, benevolent, educated, judicious, useful. Suppose him to train his children with the utmost propriety, and even maintain family worship. Here is a strong case. But he is not pious, in the estimation of the judicious. A Christian female adventures marriage. What will be the probable effect ? Will she not be likely, in her love and respect for him, after intimate and prolonged witness of his excellence, to ask whether he has not religion enough ? Will she not doubt whether she herself be as good, because she finds her life less perfect ? Will it not seem to her impossible that this kind, good, and apparently religious man, who seems to do the best he can, should be an heir of wrath, a candidate for infinite misery ? Her heart will rise up against the discriminating doctrines of grace. She will be afraid to see them in the word of God, lest they make her think less favorably of the character and destiny of her husband. Her soul, obscured under clouds of doctrinal doubts, and barren under destitution of practical cultivation, will grow sterile of spiritual enjoyment ; and if religion maintain its doubtful empire in her heart, it will be too feeble to accomplish anything important for her family, or the world." Here the man of devotion and benevolence, who is excellent in his feelings and dispo-

sition, who trains his children for God, and maintains family worship, is contemptuously said to have only a *human excellence*, because he cannot subscribe to certain dogmas, and has not that piety which is distinct from goodness! And this is said of him when he is admitted to be far superior, in all that is amiable and good, to his wife! Godliness is goodness—a goodness which is the fruit of faith and love.

#### VI. BROTHERLY KINDNESS.

“Be kindly affectioned one towards another,” is the command of God; and to suppose there can be Christians without this kindness, is equally as absurd as to suppose the body can have life without the spirit. Christians, then, are bound to each other by the strong ties of good will. They walk in the unity of the spirit; they strive together for the faith of the Gospel; they do as they would be done by. They use not the language of scandal, are not tale-bearers, and seek not to injure each other’s reputation or business. They are kind, and live together like brethren. They help the needy; they visit the sick and imprisoned; they comfort the afflicted, and go about doing good. They are peacemakers, and study constantly for the things that make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another; their hearts are assimilated together, and have communion in the same hopes, affections and views. It has been truly said, this kindness shows itself by praying for our brethren; (Eph. vi. 18;) bearing one another’s burdens, by assisting and relieving each other; (Gal. vi. 2;) by forbearing with one another; (Col. iii. 13;) by reproof and admonishing in the spirit of meekness;

(Prov. xxvii. 5, 6 ;) by establishing each other in the truth ; by conversation, exhortation, and stirring up one another to the several duties of religion, both public and private.—(Jude 20, 21. Heb. x. 24, 25.)

Many instances of this brotherly kindness are mentioned in Scripture. The most prominent of these are David and Jonathan, Paul and Timothy, our Lord, Lazarus and John. No bond of union can be stronger than this, and none so productive of unalloyed happiness. How great is the enjoyment of that church, where the hearts of all are knit together in love ! Such a church is a miniature of heaven. It realizes that there is a peace which passeth knowledge and understanding, a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. The prayer of one is the prayer of all, and the interest of one the interest of all. Their souls mingle together like drops of water ; they are linked in their feelings, linked in their hopes, linked in their interests. Constitutional peculiarities are forgotten ; everything harsh or discordant is mellowed down ; all “irregularities and angles sleep in the shadow.” The slightest thoughts of each other are penetrated, and their faintest desires forestalled. Sacrifice is a pleasure, labor a privilege, and devotion the highest bliss. A holy charm and sweetness are spread over the occupations of life, and all its social diversions. These feelings, being heaven-born, are permanent. Seasons may roll away, the affairs of life may change, and fortune may frown—still the bond of union will remain unbroken ; for it embraces the poor and the humble, as well as the rich and exalted ; and knows nothing of titles, honors, or worldly dis-

tinctions. If there be an elysium on earth, it is this union—this reciprocity of spirit—this oneness of soul. Nothing wakes up a holier feeling, or thrills more delightfully through the heart. “Behold how good and how *pleasant* it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

#### VII. LOVE TO ALL MEN.

“If,” said the Savior, “ye love those that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans so?” To love those who are kind to us, or who belong to our party, is an ordinary virtue, compared with love to all men; and yet, this higher virtue is seldom urged in many pulpits. But no man comes up to the mark of duty, who does not labor to produce this love in the hearts of his people; and no man can be a Christian unless his heart is warmed by it. I care not what he may believe; how strict may be his observance of the Sabbath and his attendance upon public worship; how many may be his prayers; how sad his countenance, or liberal his gifts to the church; if he does not love all men, he is no Christian; he is a mere heathen in his feelings, and a stranger to the pure spirit of Christ. Did not Jesus love all, and die for all? Did he not invite all to the waters of everlasting life? Did he wrong any for entertaining erroneous opinions? Did he persecute those not of his nation or religion?

In nothing do pretended Christians come so far short of true religion as in regard to loving all men. Look at facts. How often do Christians go forth to war, for the purpose of obtaining land and wealth, when the principle upon which they

act is equally as wrong as for me to murder a family, in order to obtain their possessions ?

Oppression is as wrong as war, and as incompatible with the spirit of Christ ; and yet in how many ways do professed Christians oppress. Masters oppress their servants ; parents oppress their children ; the rich oppress the poor ; the employer oppresses the employed ; rulers oppress their subjects ; slaveholders oppress the enslaved ; strong Christian sects oppress those which are weak. But every form of oppression is wrong, and a sin against God.

Fraud is also wrong. There is much of this in the world. The man who cheats by a false weight or measure, defrauds ; and so does he who deceives you with regard to the quality of any article of merchandise.

Persecution is also wrong. There are many ways to persecute. Those thrown into prison for their faith, or loaded with irons, or banished from their country, or stript of their property, or denied their rights, are persecuted. So are those whose characters and views are misrepresented, who are assailed by the tongue of scandal and abuse, or who are sought to be put down by the agency of prejudice and unfairness. Who, then, you will ask, are Christians ? I answer, Certainly not those engaged in imprisoning and destroying their brethren of a different creed ; not those who go about defaming their brethren of other sects ; not those who employ and countenance such public defamers. As well might you say, the inquisitors themselves were Christians, as such cruel persecutors. Does not God say, *Speak evil of no man ?* This, to be sure, does not prohibit officers



of justice from condemning the evil, nor ministers of the word from reproving the wicked ; nor private persons from reproving those who commit sin ; but it does forbid all false representations of others, and all attacks upon private or public character. Such speaking is opposed to the whole tenor of the Gospel, expressly condemned as an abomination, and threatened with a terrible punishment. It is proof of a most depraved heart ; for who but the depraved could stoop to a work so mean, detestable and pernicious ? And yet, this evil-speaking constitutes much of the opposition which liberal Christians have to encounter. Many who claim to have all the piety of the age, and hold themselves up as the only true lights shining in the world, are, 1. Constantly "charging others with facts they are not guilty of. 2. Affixing scandalous names and odious characters which they deserve not. 3. Aspersing a man's actions with foul names, importing that they proceed from evil principles, or tend to bad ends, when it doth not or cannot appear. 4. Perverting a man's words or acts disadvantageously by affected misconstruction. 5. Partial or lame representation of men's discourse or practice, suppressing some part of the truth, or concealing some circumstances which ought to be explained. 6. Instilling suggestions which create prejudice in the hearers. 7. Magnifying and aggravating the faults of others. 8. Imputing to our neighbor's practice, judgment, or profession, evil consequences which have no foundation in truth."

Now, is this loving all men ? Is this living up to the golden rule ? What is the difference between such slander and the false reports which

are circulated respecting those who make no pretension to faith and piety? Does the circumstance that a man is engaged in promoting error, justify any in assailing him with slander? Surely a good end cannot justify the use of unholy means. Besides, if we have true love for all men, how can we slander any? Those who slander their neighbor hate him, and wish his injury. I care not how great may be their pretensions to piety. All their prating about religion, and truth, and God, does not shield them from the imputation of being vile slanderers, who have put on the cloak of godliness the better to accomplish their selfish ends. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also."—(1 John iv. 20, 21.) Many, I know, are disposed to reverence as godly the man who wears a long face, makes loud prayers, and bitterly denounces all who do not adopt his creed, even though he wrongs the widow, defrauds the orphan, filches the hard earnings of the poor, and vilely misrepresents his brethren of other sects. But such a man is as far from the kingdom of God as the profane, the Sabbath breaker and the worldling. Those only are Christians who love all men, and treat all as brethren. We must love all of every color, all of every nation, all of every character, or we are not disciples of him who gave himself a ransom for all men. We must love our fellow-beings as men, irrespective of creed or country; love them not because of our party, but because they are our

brethren, and children of a common parent. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"—(1 John v. 1—5. It is not enough to love in word; we must keep the commandments. "Hereby perceive we the love of *God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of *compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"—(1 John iii. 16, 17.)

Such is the love of a true Christian. This love is the end of the commandment, the fulfilling of the law, the sum of all duty. True religion, then, cannot be separated from benevolent feelings and good works.

I have now offered what I purposed on the practice of a true Christian; and though I have only glanced at what I should be glad to say, I have presented some of the prominent traits in his character. All who sustain this character are what the Bible terms "saints," "godly," "believers," "followers of Christ," "friends of the *Savior*," "lights of the world," "the salt of the

earth." Do you ask how this character can be formed? I reply, you have the answer in the two preceding sermons. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and let his blessed religion sanctify your hearts. Then your lives will be right. True faith will render your hearts holy, and holy hearts will produce holy lives.

## SERMON X.

### OBJECTIONS TO UNIVERSALISM CONSIDERED.

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I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews.—Acts xxvi. 2.

THE privilege, which all men here enjoy, of speaking for themselves, is one of the most precious of any that can be granted to intelligent beings. To be condemned unheard; to be cast off without any opportunity of speaking in self-defence, is hard and cruel. Therefore, the framers of our wise constitution secured this right to the citizens of our widely extended country. We have not, as Paul had, to beg the privilege; we can claim it as a right. It matters not what the crime may be of which we stand accused, how aggravated, how fearful in its consequences; the law cannot condemn us without a hearing.

In religious matters, not so much right is secured. Many churches are far more illiberal *and unjust* than any court which can be found in

the land. They will accuse a man; and his accusers will sit in judgment upon him, and then refuse him the privilege of speaking in his own defence. Hundreds and hundreds of cases have occurred in New England, where men have been excommunicated for their opinions, and not allowed to offer a word in support of those opinions. Agrippa, before whom Paul was arraigned, was far more just; so was the chief captain who rescued him from the violence of the mob. We should hardly expect from heathen authorities more justice and right than from Christian ministers and churches; but, in this particular, the balance is in favor of the heathen. But it is wrong, it is unjust, it is cruelly unchristian, to condemn any man, for any cause, without allowing him to speak for himself.

Something, however, strongly allied to this, is very general among various of the different sects in this country. What charges are daily preferred against the Universalists! How are their characters assailed and their views opposed! And yet, when they ask the privilege of speaking in their own defence, through the same medium in which they have been attacked, they are spurned and scorned, and their petition is not heard for a moment. Who of us can gain admittance to a pulpit where we have been attacked, or to a periodical in which we have been vilified and opposed? These privileges have been denied us again and again, and that too, when cut off from every other opportunity of speaking for ourselves!! Under these circumstances, we must use such means as we have of reaching those who urge their objections against our religion. We must make our

press speak, and our pulpit speak, in such tones as shall be distinctly heard by those who have wronged and condemned us, and that without a hearing.

I have thought, therefore, that it might be well, in concluding this series, to answer for ourselves touching some of the things whereof we are accused. I do not, however, deem it necessary to take any notice of the aspersions which sour bigotry, blind prejudice, and narrow-hearted sectarianism, are constantly dealing out against the moral and Christian character of Universalists. We live in the world—we mingle daily with our fellow-men, and they will judge from actual knowledge and observation in regard to our moral and Christian worth. But I will speak of the objections which are urged against our views—against the doctrine which we hold. It will not be expected that in one discourse I should answer them all; but if I answer some of the most prominent, it will be sufficient—inasmuch as that will show you how easily we could dispose of the whole.

The first objection which I will introduce, is variously stated; but generally as follows:—

*“We have two chances to your one; for if our doctrine fails, yours will save us; but if yours fails, ours will not save you; prudence, therefore, dictates, that no man should be a Universalist.”*

This is a great objection with many, and, perhaps, has done more than any other, to prevent people from examining our doctrine. But it rests entirely on assumptions.

1. It assumes that a man can believe or disbelieve just what he pleases; and, therefore, that

there is the same merit in faith, that there is in resisting temptation. Now we know perfectly well, that such is not the case. No man can believe contrary to the evidence presented before him. I cannot believe in endless misery ; for I have carefully weighed the evidence for and against it, and am convinced, beyond all doubt, that it is utterly false. Hence, if I am damned for not believing it, I am damned for disbelieving what appears to me as false as atheism itself, or as to say two and two are six. Now I know not how this may be viewed by others, but to me it seems like the very essence of cruelty and injustice ; and, therefore, I cannot ascribe such conduct to the infinite Jehovah. Thus, you see, the objection before us rests on a false assumption ; and, therefore, it must be wholly unfounded.

2. But this is not all. The objection assumes that, if Universalism is false, God will damn Universalists for believing it. Now, I would ask for the evidence of this. We believe in God and Christ ; we believe in the inspiration of the Bible ; in all the ordinances it enforces ; in rewards and punishments, and in the glories of heaven ; and is not this all that is required ? Where, in the whole Bible, does God say, No man can be saved, unless he believes in endless punishment ? Nowhere. Such a statement cannot be found. Or where is it said, God will doom any to endless agony, for believing that he is good to all men ; for entertaining too good an opinion of him ? Nowhere. A statement like this cannot be found. For aught that appears then, even if Universalism is false, our chance is equally as good as that of the partialist, inasmuch as what is peculiar to Partialism



is never held up as essential to salvation ; and inasmuch as God has never threatened to damn any for the good opinions entertained of his benevolence.

Let it not be replied—the belief in endless misery will be more likely to produce reformation ; for that is yielding the objection, inasmuch as it admits that if a Universalist is a reformed man, he can be saved ; whereas, the objection says, a Universalist cannot be saved, unless Universalism is true. Besides, when it is said Partialism is more likely to produce reformation than Universalism, a point is assumed which does not appear in a very favorable light, if viewed in connection with facts ; for according to facts, almost all the horrid cruelties and merciless barbarities of the earth have been committed by those who believed in endless punishment. This was the faith of those who murdered our Lord and his apostles ; of those who carried on what are called the ten persecutions, in which many hundred thousands lost their lives ; of those who carried on the persecutions in Holland, where one hundred thousand died by the hand of the executioner ; in France, where a far greater number were cruelly massacred ; in England, where persons have been burned to death, and banished from their own land ; in Ireland, where thousands were massacred in a day ; in Scotland, Spain, Italy, which have been the scenes of bloodshed and wide-spread desolation. Such are some of the fruits of the doctrine of endless misery ; and will you say it makes men amiable, excellent, humane ; that it produces reformation ; that those who believe it are more likely to reform than those

who believe in God's goodness? Will you say that the persecutors of Origen were better than Origen; that Calvin was better than Servetus; that those who imprisoned George De Bennville were better than the victim of their cruelty; that those who stoned Murray were better than Murray; and that those who now slander the Universalists are better than the Universalists?

Thus, you see the assumptions on which this objection rests, and the entire falsity of those assumptions.

Two chances! what chance has any man of salvation? I recently saw an incident, which very fully answers this question. A Limitarian said to a Universalist, at the close of a long argument, "Well, I have two chances to your one." "How so?" was the reply. "I rely for salvation on the infinite mercy of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord, and is not this one of your chances?" The Partialist was obliged to answer in the affirmative. "Then, sir," continued the Universalist, "I would ask, what chance for salvation you have besides that?" The opposer was silent; and thus he was compelled to own that his two chances were only one chance.

And so it is—one chance is the mercy, grace, and love of God, as revealed in the Lord Jesus; the other chance is something else, though no one can tell what. The fallacy of the objection we are considering, has been exposed as follows:—"Two men are going to sea. One has an old, leaky, shattered vessel, which long since should have been condemned as unseaworthy. The other has a new, strong vessel, which affords all the safety that can be enjoyed upon the broad

ocean. The owner of this vessel proposes to the former to take passage with him, and assures him that he will be vastly more safe. But he replies, "I wish to be on the safe side, and I will take out my leaky ship, for then I shall have two chances; because if mine fails, I can flee to yours."

Who would not say to such a man, your chance, sir, is no chance; for you are sure of being wrecked; your only safety is in the chance which the new vessel affords?

So I would say—he that rests on anything save the mercy of God, gains nothing; all other chances are like the leaky vessel; and consequently, there is only one chance, and on that we hang our hopes. We rely on the mercy of God; if that fails, we fail; if that is secure, we are safe. If, therefore, you can say a man is prudent in relying on something besides God's mercy, then it is prudent not to embrace our religion.

Thus, we see no man can have more than one chance; and that is the chance of all.

Another objection to our religion is thus stated: *'If Christ and the Apostles taught Universalism, why were they so bitterly opposed by the wicked; and why were they so differently treated by sinners from what those are who now preach the doctrine?'*

This, by many, is regarded as a conclusive and unanswerable objection. But before it could have any weight with me, I must be convinced that the objection is right, in saying that our preachers meet a different reception among sinners from what Jesus and the Apostles met. This is the pith of the objection; and if this is false,

the objection is without weight. I ask, therefore, is it true, that in the promulgation of our views, we meet a different reception from what Jesus and the Apostles did?

How are we received? I answer, we are opposed with great bitterness by the aristocratic. They cry out very violently against us, and say that the prevalence of our religion would destroy all those distinctions which have been created by pride and a love of dominion. Just so it was in the days of Jesus and the Apostles.

Again: we are opposed by the most bigoted and exclusive religionists; those who claim to have all the piety and truth. Now, I ask, was it not precisely so in the days of the Apostles? Were not their greatest enemies among the Pharisees, who claimed to be the only true religionists of the world? And did not Jesus say more against those bigoted and exclusive people, than against any other class?

Again: we are opposed most by those who attach the highest importance to the doctrine of endless misery. Among the various sects of the land, there are many persons who have but little faith in the eternity of punishment; and though they are church members, and pious Christians, they think but little of this cruel doctrine. Now such persons are seldom found opposing us; they cannot persuade themselves to think that our religion is so extremely dangerous and bad.

It was just the same in the times of the Savior and the Apostles. Those the most strict in regard to the Jewish religion, were the most bitter against the Gospel. Look at Saul of Tarsus. He was educated in the most faithful manner, according to

Jewish faith, and was fired with zeal in its defence. But who was ever more bitter in his opposition to the Gospel? See him asking the authorities for letters to justify him in putting the Christians to death? It was the same with the whole body of the Jews. Hence, Paul says, "We both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe."—(1 Tim. iv. 10.) Now it was not trusting in Jehovah as the living God, nor as a Savior, that subjected the Christians to this reproach; but it was trusting in Jehovah as the Savior of all men. Thus the opposition to Jesus and the Apostles came chiefly from the zealous believers in endless punishment! They opposed the Gospel on the same ground and for the same reason, that the believers in endless misery now oppose Universalism; and we can say just as Paul did, we labor and suffer reproach because we trust in a God who is the Savior of all. Does not this, then, show that we preach the same religion that Jesus and the Apostles preached?

Ah! but says one, sinners flock to hear those of your faith; it is the irreligious, not the religious, that first receive your gospel. Granted—granted. And now I say, if any one fact stands out more prominently than all others in the gospel history, it is the fact that sinners, and not the religious persons, were first to gather around the Savior. So notorious was this, that it was urged as a prominent objection against him. Hear the self-righteous Pharisees:—" *This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.*" Yes, sinners flocked around him, and he did not hesitate to

admit them to his presence ; and because it was so, he was condemned. But to whom should a sinner go except to a Savior ? To whom should the sick go but to the physician ? And would you urge it as an objection against a physician, that he had the sick flocking to see him ? The proud, haughty, bigoted Pharisee did not feel his need of a Savior, and he did not go to Jesus for help.

But it will be said, plausible as all this appears, it does not seem reasonable to suppose that Jesus and the Apostles would have been opposed as they were, if they had taught the salvation of all men ; for what wicked person would be ready to fight against the bearer of such good tidings ? Then we must conclude, must we, that it was the saints which stoned Murray, and imprisoned De Benn-ville, and killed his fellow-laborer, and banished Origen ? The objection would be more plausible, had not Universalists encountered almost every imaginable indignity in the discharge of their duty as ministers of the Gospel. I say, then, we are as bitterly opposed, and by the same characters, as were Jesus and the Apostles, which is conclusive evidence that we work the same work which they did, and preach the same Gospel.

It is argued that Universalism must be false, *for it makes the hearts of the righteous sad.*

This objection has the merit of brevity : it is stated in a few words. I am willing to own that if Universalism really gives occasion for a righteous heart to be sad, it is an evidence that it is false. But it is proper that I should observe, that righteous persons are liable to be mistaken, the same as any others. They may be made sad by imag-

inary troubles and evils. By mistaking the nature and tendency of Universalism, they may be really sad to hear of its prevalence. But, in such a case, it is not Universalism that makes them sad; it is rather their false notions of Universalism. Good men are often made sad by what is calculated to produce an indescribable amount of good. Really, Universalism has nothing to produce sadness in a righteous heart; for certainly a good man could not be made sad by being told that all others will become good also. Such a declaration must be a source of unspeakable joy. Nothing could so lift up the heart as such information. Think you a father would be made sad by being told that all his wayward sons would be restored to paths of virtue? Or that a mother would be sad to hear that all her dissolute daughters would be restored? But as well might you say this, as to say a good man would be made sad by hearing that all men would become good also.

Am I told that many pious people are sad on account of this doctrine? I reply, any heart made sad by the doctrine of universal salvation, is not righteous—it is unrighteous. In this strong statement, I except those who have a mistaken view of the character and tendency of the doctrine. But excepting these, all who are made sad by Universalism are unrighteous; their hearts are in rebellion against God, and their sadness is full proof of this.

Let me illustrate. What is the true form of government? All are ready to answer, the republican form—the form with which we are favored in this land of the free. And yet, when the American revolution commenced, how many hearts

were made sad—and how did their sadness increase, as the prospects for independence and freedom brightened ! But the enemies of the revolution were enemies of America, and friends of the mother country. They did not sympathize with the mass of the people—they wished the many to be the slaves of the few ; they were unwilling to place themselves on a level with the humble laborer, the industrious mechanic ; or have a form of government established which would give to the poor man the same rights and privileges enjoyed by the rich. Hence they were sad ; and as they saw their exclusive rights endangered, and the cause of the many prospering, their sadness increased ; their wails were heard from a few pulpits, in every dwelling of aristocracy, and among all those fighting against the revolution ! Now this sadness was owing entirely to the hostility which they felt against the common interest ; and not because republicanism was wrong or dangerous.

It is the same with thousands who now oppose us. They are exclusive in their feelings—they do not sympathize with the many—they look with scorn and haughty contempt upon all not of their caste.

Others are sad in consequence of the prevalence of Universalism, because they are great sectarists, and had rather any man would be lost than saved, unless he can be saved according to their method of salvation. Now who would say that the scorn and haughty pride of those claiming exclusive rights, or the sectarian bitterness of those whose love is bounded by the narrow limits of a party, have righteous hearts ? Their hearts are



lamentably unrighteous ; and this is the cause of their sadness. If you desire any further proof, look at the difference between the Jews and the early Christians. The former were a self-righteous, proud, exclusive, selfish people, who loved only those of their nation ; but the latter were a meek, humble, tender, and benevolent people, full of love for all men. Hence, the Jews were mad, and gnashed their teeth in anger, when they heard Jesus and the Apostles teach that God's grace extended to the Gentile world : this was too bad, and in view of it, their hearts were indescribably sad. Not so with the Christians ; for when Peter had his vision of the sheet, in which he was taught the salvation of all, he went in and ate with the Gentiles, and thereby recognised them as brethren. His fellow believers thought this a great offence, and took him to task for what he had done ; but he related to them his vision ; unfolded the great plan of grace, and concluded by saying he could not withstand God. " When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."—(Acts xi. 18.) Now why were not these Christians made sad ? Was it because their hearts were unrighteous ? O no ; they loved the Gentiles ; they had the true spirit of the gospel ; their hearts were righteous, and therefore they rejoiced the more when they heard that salvation would extend to them.

And this is the effect which a proclamation of God's unbounded grace always has upon a righteous heart. When, therefore, any are made sad by our blessed religion, it is either because they *misunderstand* it, or because their hearts are un-

righteous. Surely, it must be good news to hear that all men will become holy; that the work of salvation will go on till all are restored.

It is said Universalism must be false, because it *denies the necessity of repentance and conversion*. A gentleman not long since remarked, that Universalists could not be saved, unless they repented. I replied, true—very true. And can any be saved without repentance? Can Baptists, or Methodists, or Calvinists? His answer was, no. Then I asked wherein they stood on better ground than that we occupy. Repentance is a means by which all men are brought into the enjoyment of religion, and we do not expect any man will be saved while he continues in sin. The reason why we hold to universal salvation, is, we expect all men will repent. We do not believe the doctrine of endless impenitence. Instead, therefore, of denying repentance, we hold to it more than any others; we hold to the universality of this work, while others hold that it extends to only a few. This is the great point of difference between us and all limitarians. Why, then, is it said we deny repentance? Because, replies an objector, you say there is nothing supernatural in the work! Supernatural! If repentance is supernatural, why can it not be produced without the aid of that machinery now in use to create great stirs, to produce unreasonable excitements, to alarm the fears of the people? Why must extra efforts be employed, and men from a distance be engaged to declaim upon the torments of hell? Why does not the preaching of those clergymen who are faithful in enforcing the popular doctrines of the day, produce conver-

sions, as well as the preaching of those who urge the same doctrines, though in a more exciting and terrific manner, and deal more in bold declamation? Is it the excitement, the terror, and the declamation that produce the conversion, or the doctrines preached? If the latter, why does not conversion follow without the declamation? And why are the labors of startling and terrific preachers attended with such peculiar effects? Besides—if conversions are supernatural, why do those converted by terrific preaching, and bold declamation, so generally fall back into the world? Out of thirty young men converted by these means a few years ago, in an academy about ten miles from Boston, only two remain steadfast. Out of about three hundred converted in the town of Woodstock, Vt., a few years since, only eight adhere to the faith!

Do you say, all who fall back are not converted—that they are deceived? Then I ask, how do you know all are not deceived? By what rule can you affirm that there is anything certain on which we can rely? Surely, if three hundred can be deceived three, six, or twelve months, eight may be deceived three, six, or twelve years! I am opposed, therefore, to such conversions. I do not believe the Holy Spirit is more partial to declamation, denunciation, misrepresentation, extravagance, vulgarity, abuse, ludicrous expressions and comparisons, than to the plain, honest, faithful, urgent preaching of the good minister of Jesus Christ; and, therefore, I am certain that the conversions produced by the means to which I have referred, are the work of men, and not of the Holy Spirit.

But while I condemn such conversions, I hold to the necessity of being converted from sin. I preach a conversion from sin—a conversion preceded by godly sorrow, and which results in newness of life. This conversion all may have, who will listen to the calls of mercy, and use faithfully the means of grace. And when all shall have been converted—turned from evil, and filled with love, the work of human redemption will be complete. This is Universalism. We hold, then, more than any others to conversion; we hold that all men will be converted. We cannot see why God should set bounds to a work so important as that of turning men from sin—why he should say to it, “Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther.” He has set no such bounds—but has declared that every knee shall bow and tongue confess that Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*Universalism cannot be true, because rejected by the great majority of Christians.*

Many regard this as a very powerful argument. They say to us, with an air of great confidence, *How can it be supposed that you are right? You are only a few in number, and we constitute the great majority of community; it is presumption to indulge in your present belief, in opposition to such vast numbers.* Precisely so might Baal’s prophets have said to Elijah. *You are blind, sir, standing alone, to suppose that you are right, and we, four hundred and fifty of us, are all wrong!* What Universalist has not encountered this objection? But it is a sword which cuts two ways; it disproves Christianity itself. Suppose an idolater had urged it against the primitive church, and

called for a vote of the world on the great question between Idolatry and Christianity, how would the case have stood? On the one hand, there would have marched up to the polls, Egyptians, Phenicians, Grecians, Romans, Assyrians, Chaldeans, nation after nation, by thousands and thousands, and given in their vote for idolatry. On the other, there would have been here and there a Christian, numbering in all, perhaps fifty or a hundred, giving in their vote for Christianity. What fearful odds! It would have been as a million to one. Now, according to the objection under consideration, Christianity would have fallen and been cast aside with contempt, as a dream of a few ignorant zealots, while idolatry would have been eulogized as the faith of the world and the eternal truth of God. Let a Mussleman or a Catholic urge this objection against our neighbors of an exclusive faith, and their orthodoxy would become heterodoxy at once. This method of deciding truth by vote, is not of modern date. We find Demetrius, the Ephesian silversmith, urging it with much confidence against the Gospel. He says, after having noticed the great profit of making shrines for the goddess Diana, "Moreover, ye see and hear that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying, they be no gods which are made with hands; so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at naught; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth." Thus he sought to prove Paul wrong by referring to the grandeur and magnificence of

this temple and the vast numbers which worshipped the goddess Diana. And this argument was not without its effect; for we are told, that when the people heard these things they were full of wrath, and cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." How much like the feeling often manifested toward us, for turning people away from the popular religion. With great spirit and wrath, we are denounced for turning people away from a religion, which can bring to its aid nearly all the grandeur and magnificence of the land, and which almost all Christendom worshippeth. Such is the fallacy of this objection. It disproves Christianity and establishes idolatry. It makes Protestantism fall before Catholicism, and Christianity before Mahomedanism.

*Universalism must be false because it is a modern doctrine.*

According to this objection, that doctrine which is most ancient, must be most in accordance with truth. The Catholics reason thus against the Protestants. Some of the Catholics say, Protestantism cannot be true, because it is only a few hundred years old, while Catholicism had existed for a thousand years before that was known. So the Orthodox: Universalism cannot be true, because it has only been preached seventy or eighty years, while our doctrine has been preached three hundred or four hundred years. But if Orthodoxy be true, because three or four hundred years old, Universalism must have a little truth in it, because seventy or eighty years old. Not only so, it is advancing towards the truth, and in the course of a few centuries, it will be sound doc-

trine. According to this, age has a wonderful influence in expelling the bad properties of a sentiment, and imparting those that are good, thus operating upon it as upon wine and many other articles of commerce. But suppose a Jew or a Pagan were to take up this argument, how would our neighbors of an opposite faith stand before it? Theirs is more emphatically a new doctrine in comparison with the faith of a Jew or Pagan, than ours in comparison with theirs. Suppose an Atheist should hear an Orthodox opposing Universalism on this ground; he might join him, and say, Yes, truly, Universalism cannot be true, because, compared with Orthodoxy, it is a new thing. And after having thus silenced the Universalist, he might turn against its opposer, and say, Your rule, sir, works your own ruin as well as the ruin of Universalists. Atheism is far more ancient than your faith. Therefore, Atheism is true and your faith false.

Nor is this all. This objection rests upon a false assumption. It assumes that Universalism originated within the last century. By turning to history, we learn that Universalism existed among the primitive Christians, and that many of the most pious, learned, and distinguished of the Christian fathers were Universalists.

*Universalism must be false, because many learned men advocate the doctrine of endless misery.*

This is supposed to be a very strong objection. How often are we reminded of the host of scholars, commentators, Biblical critics and ministers, who reject Universalism. Nothing has greater influence in prejudicing people against what we

believe, than this. How, it is said, can all these learned men be wrong? They have great natural talents, and great acquired talents, and therefore they must know. /

Precisely so said the people, when the Gospel was first preached. There were the doctors of the law, the high priest and all the learned men of the Jewish nation, arrayed against it; and certainly they ought to know better than ignorant and unlettered fishermen of Galilee. The same argument was urged by the heathen against the Gospel. They referred to their philosophers, their moralists, their priests, the great men of their nation—saying, they know, they are better qualified to judge than these ignorant advocates of Christianity. The same argument was urged by the Catholics against the Reformation. Therefore, if we admit this objection, we condemn the reformation, yea, we condemn Christianity itself, and to be consistent, should embrace Heathenism in its most corrupt form.

Perhaps I shall be told it was for the interest of the Jews, and Pagans, and Catholics, to have their doctrines preserved as they then were; and therefore they would not examine Christianity—their interest was against any change. Perhaps I shall be told also, that they were swayed by prejudice, by education, by pride of opinion and by a love of popularity, and that in this way the learned and the great were kept from investigating and embracing the truth. Very true; and this is our answer to those who urge the objection under consideration. It disproves Christianity. Not only so, it assumes that only the ignorant have advocated Universalism; whereas it numbers



## 216 OBJECTIONS TO UNIVERSALISM CONSIDERED.

among its supporters many of the most distinguished scholars of the world.

Thus we see how futile are all the objections which are urged against the doctrine of unbounded grace. They do not touch any one of the principles on which the doctrine rests, and if no stronger objections can be urged, the doctrine will go on till it shall have covered the whole earth—till error shall have been abandoned, and all men have become true followers of God.

I know how this doctrine is opposed—how men fight against it—how violent are the exertions employed to put it down—how aid is brought from a distance to effect its overthrow. But all this will avail nothing. Great is the truth and in the end it will prevail. Let us be strong then in the Lord, and be willing to follow our Master through evil as well as good report.

With this sermon I close my series. I have spoken to you plainly, yet affectionately. I have sought to present the truth, and strengthen your confidence in God. You have my thanks for the attention you have paid, and the interest you have manifested. May we all be faithful to God, live together in love, and die in the triumphs of our most holy faith.











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